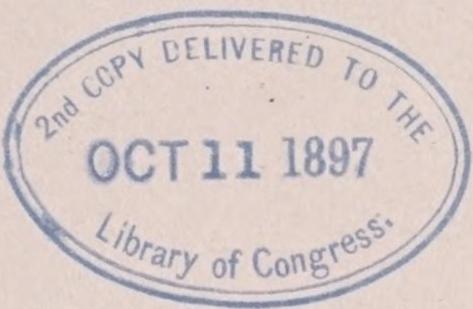


WYNOASSET





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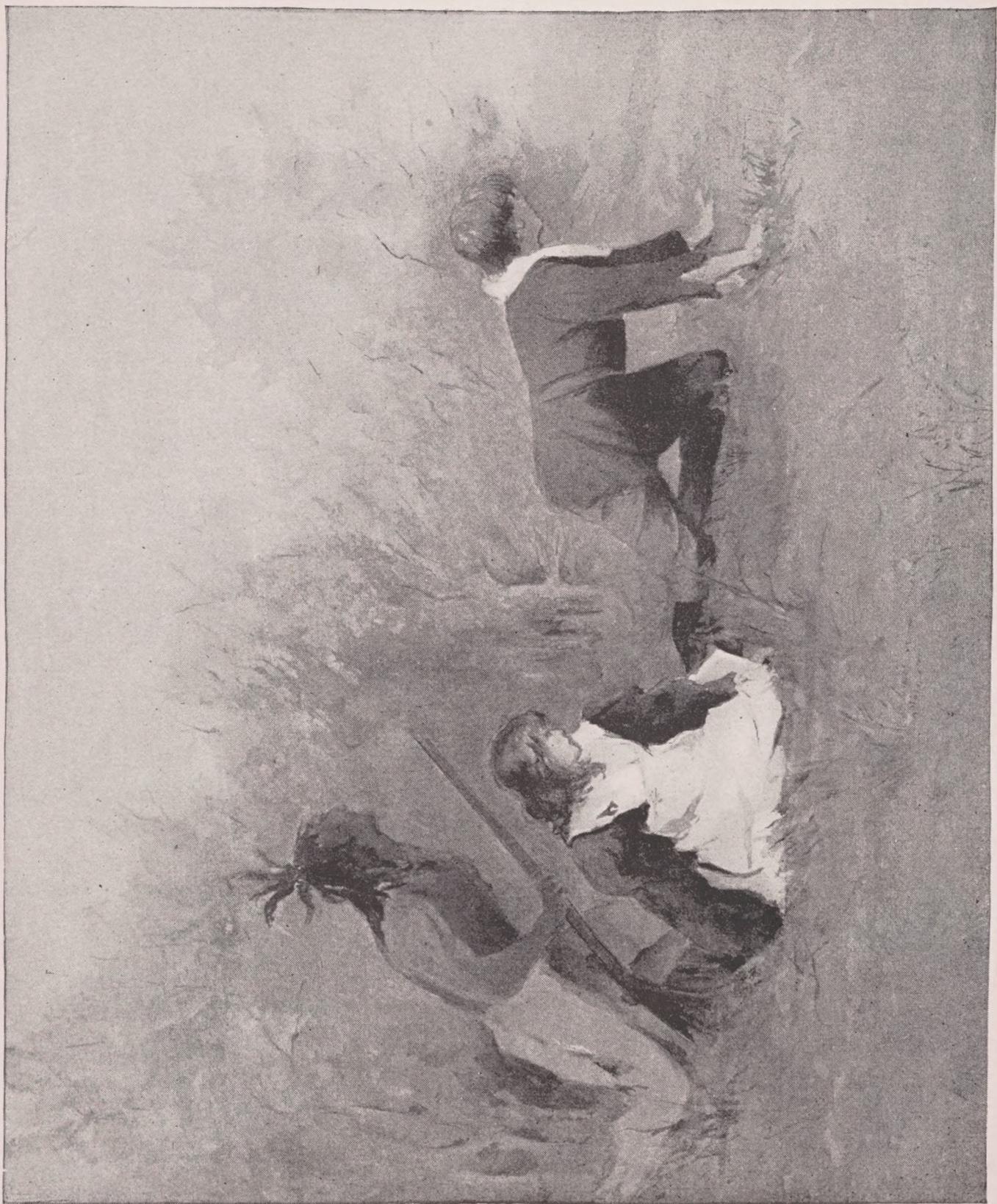
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

WANOLASSET

THE-LITTLE-ONE-WHO-LAUGHS



"INDIANS!"

WANOLASSET

THE-LITTLE-ONE-WHO-LAUGHS

BY

A. G. PLYMPTON

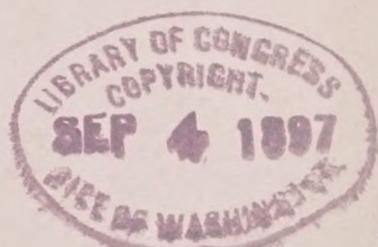
AUTHOR OF "DEAR DAUGHTER DOROTHY," "BETTY, A BUTTERFLY,"
"A BUD OF PROMISE," "ROBIN'S RECRUIT," ETC.



Illustrated by the Author

BOSTON
ROBERTS BROTHERS

1897



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WANOLASSET.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY ENOCH.

ONE spring day in the early history of Medfield some children were playing by the brook that sings so blithely on its way through the middle of the town. Suddenly a little urchin shot out from the group, which instantly gave chase, and the whole rabble, shrieking like savages, came pell-mell around the meeting-house and into the main street of the settlement.

To gain a fair idea of what a Puritan village of those early colonial days was like, one can do no better than to take a look at Medfield, as, in its conscientious thrift and sober decorum, it lay in the smile of that afternoon sunshine.

The main street of the village ran east and west, and the houses were built only upon the north side of it, so that at noon the sun shone straight in the doorway of each dwelling, — a convenient expedient for reckoning time in the days when clocks were a luxury, and there were not perhaps a dozen watches in all Boston. For the most part these houses were plain wooden structures of two stories in front, with a roof which sloped back to a lean-to, but here and there stood a rude cabin with thatched roof, the home of some early settler who had not yet found time or means to build a more substantial dwelling. Another street crossed the main one at right angles, and here, at the four corners, on a rise in the ground, stood the church or meeting-house, before which, it being a lecture day, a man was vigorously beating the drum to summon the people to worship. To complete the picture, a knot of men in the sombre garb of the Puritans was making its way to the church, which sight instantly checked the noisy spirits of the children.

The foremost two of these men were the pastor of the church, the godly and gracious Mr. Wilson, as he has been called, and Goodman Whittaker, one of the seven selectmen who administered the affairs of the town. Whittaker was a typical Puritan, with solemn mien and of a rather stern humor. As he lay his hand on the shoulder of the nearest lad, he said frowning, —

“ How now, boy? What means this hubbub? One would think the howling savages from the wilderness were upon us.”

The boy thus addressed was not over eight years of age, and of a different type from the fair and more clumsily built children around him. He had, in truth, a foreign air that would not pass unchallenged in any Puritan colony, notwithstanding he was called by the orthodox name of Enoch Marsden, and had been brought to the country by as grim and thoroughgoing a Puritan as ever hacked down the idols of the unregenerate.

The boy was slender and sinuous, fleet of foot,

as the distance he had managed to keep between himself and his pursuers well proved, and his small face upraised to meet the frown of the wrathful selectman was of an oriental cast and wondrously rich and gentle. As he drew his hand from the breast of his doublet, one saw that a small green snake was coiled around his wrist. The snake's head lay cosily in the palm of his hand, which was curved over it with the impulse of protection.

Enoch's eyes dropped from the face of his questioner, and gazed with pensive interest at the snake.

"I tried to save this harmless thing from slaughter," he made answer. "I know not why it should have vexed my playfellows, but there was nothing else."

"Why, now, the snake belongs to me," broke out one of Enoch's pursuers, a fine, fair-skinned little fellow of nearly the same age as himself. "It was I myself who caught it by the brook, and long ere now should have had a stone on its

head had not Enoch taken it from me. Truly, 't is a queer sight to see him fondle such foul creatures. 'T is as if he had a charm over them all. Snakes, toads, rabbits, yes, raccoons, and even foxes,—there is not one that will not come at his call, and 't was but yesterday when he milked the cross cow of Goodwife Green that I heard many declare there was witchcraft in him."

"These be strange tales," said one of the men, gravely. In truth, it was none other than the minister himself, for 't was an age when even learned men willingly accepted a supernatural explanation for that which defied their understanding. "These be strange tales. Yet methinks I have heard something ere now concerning this matter. Have a care, child, that ye do not enter into communication with the evil one, who, while he may enable thee to do deeds that transcend human power, may yet be the ruin of thy soul. Therefore, child, look to it."

"Yes, Master Wilson, I will look to it," answered little Enoch obediently, although to his

childish mind the discourse of the learned minister could have had little meaning.

"May it please you, Master Wilson, make him give us the snake," now besought the boy who had previously claimed it.

"Yes, yes," cried all the little Puritans, "let us have the snake that we may kill it."

With his right arm Enoch tried to ward off the would-be destroyers of the snake, while with quick, supple movements he kept himself free of the bloodthirsty little rustics, to whose purpose it appeared the elders were not altogether unfriendly.

In those days when the tie between different races of the human family was but feebly felt, the bond between our race and that of our dumb brothers was not perhaps even recognized. Moreover, the slaughter of animals and birds that the scarcity of food in those first years after the landing of our forefathers in the American wilderness made a necessity had awakened all the instincts of the hunter and trapper. These boys,

therefore, could no more understand the sense of brotherhood that Enoch felt for the creatures of the forest — yes, for all things, even the smallest that bear life — than he could understand their impulse to destroy them.

Their voices, however, raised again into eagerness, inflamed the ready anger of Whittaker.

"Peace, peace!" he cried. "Thy foolish clamor hath delayed us too long already. It behooves thee to rule your spirits, else the matter will be taken in hand. And now away with you!"

"But first take the snake and kill it," cried a voice that was recognized as that of Christian Marsden, the father of Enoch. "Nay, good Master Wilson," he said firmly, as the minister seemed about to interpose on behalf of Enoch, "this matter doth surely lie between the boy and myself, being a question as to my authority over him. So now, this being not the first nor the second time that he hath disobeyed my behest that he meddle not with such loathsome creatures, let him give up the snake in proof of his

proper subordination, which also will be a fulfilling of the scripture which saith the seed of the woman shall put her heel on the head of the serpent."

The moment that the voice of Marsden fell on Enoch's ear he felt sure that the doom of the tiny green thing which was now figuring somewhat grandly as "the serpent" was settled. But even the habit of strict obedience which the Puritans exacted of their children and in which Enoch had been bred, was not so strong as that unnoted law of his nature which impelled him to draw the snake closer to his bosom.

In a moment, however, Marsden wrenched it from him, and, throwing it to the children, said sternly,—

"Hearken to me, thou heathen child! I will crush this abomination out of thee and bring thee up in the true faith."

Christian Marsden was a new-comer into the town, and little was known of him except that he was possessed of unusual intellectual gifts and had travelled in many lands. It was whispered

that Enoch's mother had been a native of some heathen country in which Marsden had sojourned, which would account for all that was odd and foreign in the boy. At all events, Marsden had succeeded in satisfying the authorities that he was "honest, peaceable, and free from erroneous opinion," and therefore a fit person to be admitted into their society and township. A house lot and home field had been apportioned him, and his house was already built.

The service in the church was long, and the sun was near its setting when Marsden with his little son walked toward their dwelling.

At the house nearest his own, Marsden stopped. It was one of the rude pioneer cabins of which mention has been made, and, though set in fair order, compared unfavorably with the substantial building of his own.

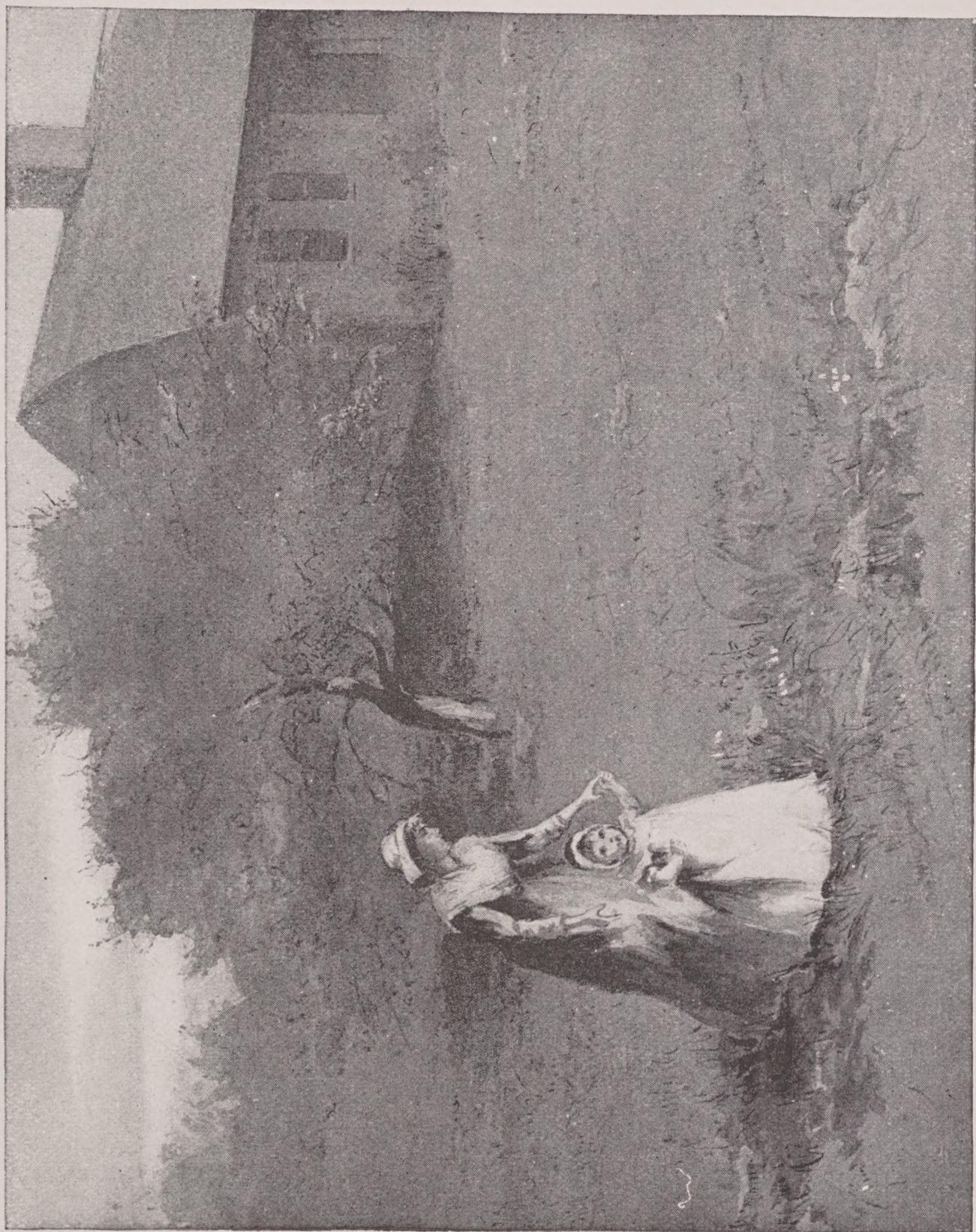
"I have business here with the Widow Whitehill," said Marsden to Enoch. "Thou canst return home, therefore, rather than tarry here till it be done."

Just at this moment, however, Mistress Whitehill came around the angle of the house. She was a very comely young dame, with pleasant eyes of a soft hazel, and of a cheerful and gracious manner. By her finger held a smiling girl baby, just large enough, with this aid, to toddle over the stubby grass. The child uttered a cry of pleasure, and held out its chubby arms to Enoch.

"If it please you, neighbor, let the boy lead the little one to and fro for a space while we have converse within," proposed Christian Marsden. "He will look sharp that no harm befall the child, I promise ye."

The widow consenting to this arrangement, the two entered the house and took seats by the open doorway. It was Marsden's first call, and as he glanced about his neighbor's dwelling, he was encouraged to believe that she would not be loath to exchange it for his own, for he had come here for the purpose of asking her to be his wife.

"Each of us doth stand in need of the kind



“JUST AT THIS MOMENT, HOWEVER, MISTRESS WHITEHILL CAME AROUND THE ANGLE
OF THE HOUSE.”

office of the other," he said. "Of a truth thou art a young woman yet, and I have long past youth; but the Lord hath set us down side by side in this wilderness, I doubt not to be a comfort to each other. Moreover, my house is waiting for a mistress, and nothing bides save 't is thy pleasure. The house is good and ample. Most comfortable is it for delicate women and children, and thy favor for it have I sought by building by the chimney a secret stairway into the cellar which forms a means of escape in case of an attack from Indians, of whom, the gossips say, thou standest in great fear. 'T were better, of a truth, to trust in the providence of God. What say you, Mistress Whitehill?"

"It seemeth to me, good sir, that with a fair means of escape from the savage enemy at hand, one could practise a more beautiful and Christian faith," answered the widow, evading the meaning of Marsden's words.

She took a covert glance at the sombre figure of her suitor. Her heart had been buried in

John Whitehill's grave, but she was helpless and lonely. Often at night when her children slept, she fancied she heard the stealthy steps of an Indian around her cottage, and the actual baying of the wolves often brought her heart to her mouth. This offer of protection, therefore, tempted her more than the most ardent proffer of love. Two vagabond Indians at that very moment chanced to pass her door, and as her eyes fell upon little Alse, it was inevitable that she should think favorably of that house "most comfortable for delicate women and children;" therefore, when Marsden pressed the question she had previously evaded, she replied that she would consider the matter seriously and give answer a day hence.

The "matter of business" being completed, Master Marsden called Enoch to lead the baby to its mother, and would have taken the lad away with him, had not Widow Whitehill begged that he might for a space remain with her. When his father was out of sight, she drew him to her side, saying,—

"Thou art a good little lad. I hope thou art happy."

"Ay, that I am," replied Enoch. "Each day some new cause have I to make me glad. Dost know that I have found a family of foxes in the swamp? The place is known to none else beside, and every day I go there to see how they fare. They follow me to the edge of the swamp when I come away. And, Mistress Whitehill, Awashamog, the Indian who has been cutting wood for my father, has promised to make a raft, and take me down the river clear to the town of the Praying Indians, which is in Natick, where Awashamog hath a son of my age. Some fair gift I shall carry him. Oh, we shall have a rare time. Beside, yesterday when I was in the swamp I found the finest flower ever I saw. It grows on a high bush, with dark glossy leaves. 'T is of a waxy white, and it hath as sweet a color as shows in thy cheeks, Mistress Whitehill."

The flower to which Enoch referred was the rhododendron, said to have been first found in

the swamps of Medfield, and later carried to England to be imported by Americans as a rare exotic.

"Thou art a brave gallant, upon my word. Well, well, child, I am glad that thou art happy. And thy father, he is right kind to thee, eh?"

"He is never unkind," Enoch answered, choosing an expression that more strictly described his father's manner toward him.

"I am glad of that, for thou art a good child, and a gentle. Is he not, baby Alse? Why, thine own brother doth not play with thee, as gently as Enoch doth! What wouldst thou say, boy, were I to give you this little one for a sister?"

"Thou art in jest," cried Enoch, while a bright color leapt into his dark face.

"I speak in good earnest. What wouldst thou say?"

"Give me Alse, and I will love her more than all else, and I will share with her all that I have."

"Give her half your brood of foxes, belike, and

take her on rafts down the river with a crafty savage. Ha?"

She snatched the child from the floor in pretended fright, and all three laughed cheerily.

"Yes, yes," cried the boy, "and Alse will have no fear. Just now I put a wee toad in her little hand, and she neither cried nor tried to do it harm. Oh, I will love her dearly."

"And wilt thou be a brother also to Ralph?"

"But he has just now killed a poor green snake by the brook," said Enoch, hesitating.

"He is a bold boy," said the mother, "that I know, but he hath a good, true heart. I do not fear that thou and he would not get on together."

"And when wilt thou give me Alse for my sister?" entreated little Enoch.

"Belike a week hence. Yes, so I do truly believe. But, Enoch, wouldest thou leave me here, a lone and helpless woman in this house, with not even a chick or a child to keep heart in me? Alone? Wouldest thou have no pity, then, for Alse's poor mother?"

"Yes, yes, I would have thee also come with Alse to our dwelling, and I would love thee also dearly."

And wrought upon by this sad image of herself she had painted, Enoch fell at her side, protesting with such distress his love and gratitude that she was fain to comfort him by the promise to give him mother, brother, and sister at one stroke.

So now the smoke that issued from Marsden's chimney assuring her of the fact that his supper-hour was at hand, she sent the child home, bidding him keep her secret well.

And as he ran happily away, she said to herself with a smile, "The little lad hath done all the wooing."

CHAPTER II.

A LITTLE PURITAN'S BIRTHDAY.

MARY WHITEHILL was sitting on the doorstone of her stepfather's dwelling with her face turned expectantly toward the high-road. This was but a rough roadway cut through the wilderness, but it connected Medfield with Dedham and through that settlement to Boston, which town represented the highest civilization of the Massachusetts Colony. A thick covert of trees surrounded the little hamlet, and the road seemed to spring out of it at the east and was lost again in the dark swamp on the west, now doubly black because of the glowing sun behind it.

And now up the village street came Enoch and Ralph. They were driving their father's cattle from the herds' walk, or common pasturage;

but the creatures straggled along at their own sweet will, while the boys talked.

"I tell you, Enoch, an Indian is but a beast, and there is no use in trying to make a man of



him," cried the elder lad. "A great toil of a truth has been this of the pious Mr. Eliot to translate our Bible for them; but the only argument that can reach an Indian is a bullet. Nay,

now, 't is not my notion, but that of many wise men. Aye, the ministers themselves do call them the veriest ruins of mankind. Even the converts at Natick, which are accounted the best of all, are but drunken beasts."

" Some drink, 't is true, yet there are many that do behave themselves like true Christians; and however small be the number of saved, 't is well worth the efforts of such as by God's mercy have been brought up in true knowledge. Why, 't is not easy to domesticate a full-grown wolf or a bear, yet we know full well that 't is a common thing to tame a cub. So, though small success is to be had with the braves, their children may become pious and good citizens."

" Truly, brother, you argue like a book. I know naught save 't were a sad pity if you were to have your way and spend your life a-teaching Indians,—you who have such a head for learning. As for me, I promise ye, if, as 't is commonly believed, the savages are minded to war with us, I shall go forth as a soldier, and

with my good gun lighten your task as fast as ever I can."

" You," laughed the other, in his turn, — " you, a boy! Aye, great things you will do."

" Aye, a boy; but look at me! Enoch, could I not easily pass for a man?"

The lad drew himself to his full height, and looked with his proud blue eyes at his brother, who answered with ready admiration, —

" I believe you could. Thou art a fine fellow, Ralph, and a clever fellow as ever I saw at growing. A heart to match thy great body hast thou, and with all thou art the veriest child that one can find in our settlement."

The two boys drew near together, clasping hands, and the eyes met with a true and noble comradeship. Each was of a fine type, — one built on a generous plan, with an indomitable spirit flashing out of honest blue eyes; the other smaller and darker, with the gift of fervor and the fine organization of the thinker. Plainly they were born the soldier and the enthusiast,

however circumstances may strive to have it otherwise.

Enoch held in his breast a gray dove, and now having caught sight of Alse sitting on the door-stone, he called to her,—

“ See, Alse, I have not forgotten ’t is your birthday. I have a gift for thee.”

The little girl tripped joyfully down the path and out into the road where her brothers stood.

“ Oh, but ’t is a beautiful dove with its bright eyes and neck of divers colors,” she cried, taking Enoch’s gift in her eager little hands. “ Will you not make a roost for it in the barn, Ralph? and perhaps its mate will come and we shall have a whole brood of tame pigeons.”

“ Truly that I will,” answered Ralph, with a twinkle in his blue eyes. “ Pigeon roasted before the coals or boiled in the pot makes a dainty meal, I promise you.”

“ Nay, the mate of this pigeon hath already served as a meal for an Indian, as Awashamog assured me, and this one would have had a like

fate had I not prevailed upon him to give it to me in exchange for a broken jack-knife. 'T is the best I could do for a present for thee, Alse, who by right should have the best that could be bought for money in Boston."

"And will mother not bring me some gift from Boston, think you? Truly she will; but I doubt if it pleases me more than the dove, Enoch, though it might be even some lustrous silk ribbon in a knot, or brave ornament."

"Perchance 't will be one of those little clocks called watches to wear in the pocket, which, 't is said, the great folks do wear now in England," said Ralph, sarcastically and with true masculine scorn. "Thy silly eyes are ever caught by vanities of such sort. Oh, yes, mother will bring you a paste comb for the hair or glittering shoe-buckles belike."

"Nay," replied Alse, serenely, "but some trifle or other. Not much, because my stepfather will be by to say, 'Tut tut, such heathen gauds do not become a child brought up in the fear of

God.' Well, I care not if only mother herself comes home safe and sound by nightfall. Of a truth, she must be timorous out so late on the highway, and with the talk there be of Indians, for never have I seen one so affrighted of Indians as our mother. Tell me, boys," she went on, "were the savages to sack this very town and carry me away into captivity, as hath happened to many a little girl before my day, would you do nothing to help me, and would I perforce become an ugly squaw in some savage tribe? "

Many a time, as now, had Alse jestingly asked this question, to be answered with jests as light; but recent events in the colony, hereafter to be described, made the lads thoughtful, and both looked earnestly, as if striving to realize such a calamity as she spoke of, at little Alse standing so serenely in the glow of the sunset, with the gray pigeon on her bosom and pointing to the peaceful village. Ralph was the first to answer.

"Should such a thing befall, I would not lie in a Christian bed till I had found thy captor.

Thou wouldst have good cause to rejoice that I am well practised in marksmanship."

"Why, now, what couldst thou do, a boy?" cried Alse. "And as for Enoch, he would not fight his dear Indians for love of me,—not he. No, not though —"

"Hush, sweetheart!" interrupted Enoch, softly. "None knows what I would not do for thee; but such big talk is folly, for a boy, as you say, could do naught where brave men fail. Yet no more than Ralph would I lie soft whilst thou had but the hard ground for thy bed."

"Oh, look, look!" interrupted Alse, making a dash into the air after the dove, which, having suddenly escaped, was now fluttering over her head.

"Quiet, quiet! do not stir, either of you," cried Enoch; and placing himself a few paces from them, he began to call softly to the dove, which stopped in its flight, and in an instant fluttered down and perched upon the boy's shoulder, nestling cosily against his cheek.

"Ah, Ralph, you could call it down only with a

gun," cried Alse, "and I not at all. What is wrong with us that we cannot do as Enoch does? What is it, Enoch?" she asked with sudden seriousness, as she walked slowly toward him, her hands open for the dove.

"But love him and he will love thee in return. That is the way with the birds. But now I hear the sorrel's hoofs away in the distance, and we will house the cattle for the night, to be ready to greet the travellers. As for you, Alse, take the pigeon into the house and feed him well."

"And then he will love thee in return, for that also is the way with the birds," laughed Ralph, as he followed his brother to the barn.

In a few moments the sound that had been detected by Enoch's quick sense became distinctly audible, and Alse, who had returned to the door-stone with the dove and a dish of Indian meal, discerned a familiar sorrel horse, on which rode a man and a woman, as was a common custom during the first century of our colonial experience. The woman sat on a cushion

buckled to the saddle and called a pillion. Sometimes besides his wife a man took two or three children on his horse; but this economical device did not commend itself to Master Marsden, who was perhaps more regardful than others of his dignity. However that might be, if his children accompanied him on a journey, they were furnished with a separate horse, much to their own liking and to the advantage of their horsemanship.

In truth Christian Marsden could well afford to humor his whims, for he was a rich man as wealth was accounted in those days. None save the minister's family took precedence of his, for among our forebears there was great distinction of rank, and each family was assigned to its proper position by the tithing-man, after which no question of rank was possible. Marsden was not only a man of learning, but he was possessed of that dignity of character which was held in such esteem by the Puritans. Moreover, his wife was connected with one of the richest and most

influential families of Boston. Her brother, Benjamin Oliver, was one of those Boston merchants that had profited by the great increase in commerce, and he lived in what was thought to be a style of great magnificence.

It was from a visit to her brother that Alse's mother was now returning. She had been riding all day, and was greatly pleased to behold her own home and the journey's end.

Alse's mother had changed but little in these years in which Alse had grown from a toddling two-year-old to a sturdy girl who could spin her five knots daily with ease. A soft bloom still tinged her cheeks, and the pleasant twinkle in her brown eyes was like the ripple in the brook that encouraged one to be merry. The brightness of her face had ever lightened such shadows as hung so closely around every Puritan family with its sombre ideal of life and stern discipline. Her children (and she ever counted Enoch as one) were happier than their small neighbors. Yet their behavior was marked by a respect and

prompt obedience such as belongs to an age where reverence is in the air. Even now, when Alse was tingling with impatience to know what her mother had brought to her, she obeyed her motion for silence, and asked no question save with those lovely eyes that had an unconscious language of their own.

"Of a truth, child," said the mother, as they entered the house together, "thy uncle Benjamin's family doth live in much luxury. Thou wouldst be well pleased with it, I doubt not. But to my mind this home of ours hath as comfortable an air."

Indeed, the room around which Mistress Marsden cast a contented eye justified her pride and pleasure in it. They had entered the kitchen, which in every dwelling was also the living room of the family and always the pleasantest room of the house. Over the coals in the great fireplace the hasty pudding for supper was sputtering in the pot. The bright pewter, arranged in a glittering row on the dresser, caught the gleaming light

of the fire and brightened a shadowy corner. A huge carved chest of oak, that held the family's supply of linen, filled a long space, and a desk belonging to the master of the house filled yet another. There was a table on which Alse began to set the wooden trenchers that served as plates, and small bowl-shaped pewter porringers for the porridge. Stools were used instead of chairs, but there were also the comfortable settles built into the fireplace, that in winter made the cosiest nook. The floor had been sanded in an ornamental pattern, and everything was clean and in exquisite order.

"And how does my cousin Betty fare?" asked Alse, forbidden to speak of what was foremost in her mind. "Tell me, has she grown as much as I, mother?"

"No," replied the mother, looking admiringly at her pretty child. "Betty is not so tall or so — sturdy. (The words *well favored* were on her tongue's tip, but she would have counted it little less than a sin to let the flattery slip.)

"She pressed me much to send thee to Boston for a visit, and, of a truth, her mother and thy uncle Benjamin did add their entreaties to Betty's."

"And you promised for me, mother; surely you did," cried Alse, eagerly.

"Nay, child, not for this present time; but I did give a half promise that if Enoch goes to the college thou shalt go with him for a visit to thy uncle's."

"Then shall I surely go," said Alse, beginning to smile and to caper about over the sandy floor. "Many a time I have heard father say that if Enoch desired it he would send him to the college. And Enoch doth desire it; and why not, since he is the very finest scholar in the town?"

But Mistress Marsden shook her head. "Nay, nay, thou dost not know all. It was his father's thought that his education was to fit him for the ministry; but now it doth appear that the boy wishes to help carry on the work of teaching the Indians, and his father doth not greatly favor the

project. I misdoubt if he be willing to bear the expense of his education for such an end."

Marsden and the two boys now entered the kitchen, and the family gathered around the table, upon which the supper was quickly spread. The meals of the Puritans were probably conducted with the solemnity that marked the most trivial act of their daily life, but on this occasion, after the unusual event of a journey, it was natural that conversation should flow more briskly than usual around the little circle.

"I rejoiced greatly," said the good wife, "that our stay in the town fell upon a training-day, for never before have I witnessed the exercises and reviews upon the common. It was a gay sight, and one that would have pleased thee, children, right well."

"Oh, tell us about it, mother dear, so it please you," cried Else, wistfully.

Childhood was grim enough in that day in the towns, but the lives of little rustics in the remote plantations were not enlivened even by

the parades and processions of training and election days,—the great festivals of our ancestors. Their long tasks were broken by few holidays, and an account of such an event as Mistress Marsden spoke of was their nearest approach to a fairy story or a romance.

“Early in the morning,” began the mother, with regret no doubt that she could give but a dull word-picture in place of the gorgeous spectacle enjoyed by the eye,—“early in the morning, in their holiday clothes and with merry faces, the townspeople set forth for the training-field. Here, after the opening exercises of prayer and a psalm, a great company of men were exercised in arms. With the bright sunshine gleaming on the polished steel of their armor, and the gay plumes on their morions a-waving, ’t was in good earnest a gorgeous spectacle. Moreover, the movements were made to the strains of music, and all the day long there was a great firing of guns and cannon. Beyond the training-field were great white tents shining on the

green, in which the people, at least those of good quality, ate their dinner."

"And wert thou among them, mother?" asked Alse, anxiously.

"That I was," answered the mother. "Thy uncle Benjamin saw to it, and very good cheer they gave us. But I was about to tell thee of a trial they had in marksmanship. A prize was offered, and a hot time they had for it, truly, for he that had shot the effigy in the head and another whose shot lodged in the bowels both claimed the victory."

"And which took the prize, mother?" asked Ralph. "Surely he who hit the creature in the head had the right to it."

"So thought the judges; but many would have it that the shot in the bowels was the fatal one, and the fellow who was passed over was very sore at the decision."

"A low fellow he was," broke in Marsden. "I heard that he said that the bowels be the part of greatest importance to a man, and that there be

many a so-called wiseacre in the town of Boston whose head is filled with such useless stuff that 't were better off than on his shoulders. But 't is child's talk, not worth the breath of a sober man in these troublous times."

"Well, there 'll be need enough of good marks-manship, I 'll warrant, if we have the trouble that is expected with the Indians. It vexed me sore to see the calmness with which they of Boston contemplated the thing. 'T is not with them as with us in the outlying settlements, who would be exposed to the greatest danger from the bloody savages."

"Do not fear, mother. Thou hast two sons who will guard thee with their lives."

Enoch laid his hand for a moment on that of the mother which lay on the table near him, but directly withdrew it on seeing the frown on his father's face. The Puritans did not favor demonstrations of affection. Perhaps, to their minds, it partook too much of the gallantry of the English court, and that party who had driven them from

their pleasant heritage into the untried waste of America. But, however restrained in the natural expression of his feelings, Enoch could not perform the slightest service for his mother without a grace and winning tenderness that bespoke his loving heart; and now, though he withdrew his hand from hers, he refilled her porringer and set it by her plate in a way that was, as one may say, first cousin to a kiss.

"And what news of Indians is abroad in Boston, sir?" asked Ralph of his stepfather. "Joseph Adams, who was this day week in Dedham, says that there hath been, as he heard, a great gathering of the savages at Wachusett Mountain, which event hath excited great uneasiness everywhere. Already our town has ordered powder and bullets to the sum of six pounds and eleven shillings, and 't is planned that a great gun shall be bought later."

"Well, certes, there be good prospect of a war," admitted Marsden. "The General Court hath passed many acts relating to this matter, and if

the conflict comes we shall, I doubt not, be prepared to meet it, though 't is thought King Philip is stirring up bitter feeling among the different tribes, and if he succeeds in forming a confederacy among them, 't will be a desperate struggle."

CHAPTER III.

THE FLOWERED SILK.

IT was not until her husband had left the house that Mistress Marsden called Alse to her and gave her a packet that she had brought from the town.

“Here is a gift, child, that was sent to thee by thy uncle, and a brave gift it is, I promise you. Pray hasten and take the wrappings off.”

This entreaty was hardly made before a roll of flowered silk was brought forth by the child’s nimble fingers. It was of an indescribable color, made by the intermingling of various hues, of which a rich red predominated; and as, with a natural instinct for decoration, Alse draped it about her small person and stood by the fire that had sprung into sudden dancing flames, her vivid dark beauty impressed itself upon her companions as if they beheld it for the first time.

"By my faith," said the mother, with her head atilt and an approving smile on her pleasant face, "'t is a proper color for thee."

Although in deference to her husband's opinions, Alse's mother dressed with the simple sobriety of the early settlers, she no doubt shared the now general fondness for display and fine attire that was so denounced by the stern Puritan preachers and law-makers. At all events, what mother in any age does not take pleasure in the bedecking of a beautiful little daughter, even though she may chide her own worldliness in so doing?

Meanwhile the two boys, looking like moles in their rustic clothes, stood watching wide-eyed the dazzling vision on the familiar hearthstone.

"'T is stuff fit for a queen's gown," said honest Ralph, looking first at Alse and then around the humble kitchen. "Why, now, what would our Alse do with it?"

"Well, of a truth 't is as pretty a piece of finery as ever I saw," said his mother, "and I did ques-

tion the suitability of it to our Alse in this little settlement; but thy uncle said, ‘Keep the silk until the maid is grown and then send her here, and I ’ll warrant,’ he added, ‘that we ’ll find her a suitable occasion for the wearing of it.’ He is a right jovial man, thy uncle Benjamin.”

“But ’t is fit for a queen’s robe,” insisted Ralph, still troubled by the incongruity of the rich fabric on the form of the child, and also the sense of remoteness to her that it gave him.

“No queen could wear it with a better grace,” said Enoch, whose sense for color and beauty was well pleased by the rich though soft hues which so set off his sister’s fairness.

“’T is surely no apparel for a christian child,” said the voice of Marsden, who had suddenly returned to the house and was now standing in the doorway, casting dark disapproving glances at his pretty stepdaughter. “Such frippery saw we often in the old world in carnival times among other abominations which drove God-fearing men clear out of England. ’T is the opinion of wise

and holy men that the manifold evils that so grievously befall our country are a visitation of God's wrath upon us for our iniquities, and chief among them for the sinful pride in clothes. Dost not remember," he went on, turning to his wife, "the discourse of Dr. Cotton Mather on the evil that has already been brought upon us by vanity. Now, plainly my advice in this matter is — give back to Benjamin this silk abomination, else thy child may grow up to be like the haughty daughters of Jerusalem."

Also cast an imploring glance upon her mother, who in truth had some difficulty in swallowing this unpalatable suggestion. She longed to keep the finery, yet was restrained by the thought that such a deed might bring a retribution in the ugly form of an Indian war, according to the philosophy of that day.

"Why, now," she said at length, "to return his gift would be a discourtesy to Benjamin and might be a cause of offence. Were it not better to put the silk away in the chest, where it will not work evil upon any one?"

"Well, well, have thy way with it," answered Marsden, "but have a care lest thou but play with temptation. The child is filled with vanity and foolishness, as it is; therefore have a care."

"That I will," returned the good wife, soberly. "Bring the silk hither, Alse, and we will even now put it out of sight."

But her husband, the stern monitor of the household, having now withdrawn, she was fain to admire yet longer the rare color and quality of the fabric, and also the rich loveliness of Alse, who still fluttered about the room like some wonderful phosphorescent winged creature that adorns the June night, alternately glowing and paling in the fitful firelight.

Although disciplined into a more demure behavior, no more than the children of our own day did Alse Whitehill escape the imperfections of poor humanity. She loved play and pleasure overmuch, and her stepfather had no difficulty in finding vanity in her for the text of many a lecture. Yet was she the sunshine of his house,

and long ere now had she, with that warm joyous smile of hers, melted his heart into unspoken tenderness.

“ ’T is a pity, ’t is a sad pity, mother dear,” she now said, shaking the silk about her until its ruby tones glowed brighter in the firelight, “ that we should shut all this brave color into the dark chest. Truly it makes the heart ache to think of it.”

“ Not so,” answered Mistress Marsden, finding a little loophole for hope; “ ’t will be but the fresher if, by good hap, thou canst yet wear it as thy uncle wished.”

“ And that will be a pretty while to wait,” murmured the child.

“ For who knows,” went on the mother, “ what may come to pass before thou art a woman grown?”

“ And all that time this rare finery to be hidden in the dark chest! Tell me, mother, wilt thou not sometimes give me so much as a look at it?”



“POOR ALSE DELIVERED HER TREASURE INTO HER MOTHER’S HANDS, AND WATCHED HER AS SHE DEPOSITED IT IN THE GREAT RECEPTACLE.”

At this moment a dark figure passed the door. It was Awashamog, the Indian. He was of Natick, and a convert, and though often at Medfield had never harmed a soul; but Mistress Marsden had not yet conquered her fear of the tawny men of the forest, whether still roaming thus or gathered by the missionaries into a town. She shuddered, and answered Alse with decision, —

“ Nay, child, put it far from thy thought, lest ye tempt Providence to send a scourge of war upon us. Now bring hither the foolish gaud, that I may put it out of the way of harm.”

Thus bidden, poor Alse delivered her treasure into her mother’s hands, and watched her dolefully as she deposited it in the great receptacle, from which there seemed slight chance that it would, in many a long day, again see the light.

“ After all,” the little girl thought, “ Enoch’s dove was by far a more satisfactory present than this rich but dangerous gift.”

She went out in the soft dusk, and, fetching the dove, sat on the doorstone, where, forgetting the

silk, she cherished the frightened thing with such gentle care that presently it ceased to flutter and nestled comfortably upon her bosom.

And so the night fell gently over the peaceful town.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH SOME FACTS OF HISTORY ARE BRIEFLY TOLD.

ALSE WHITEHILL'S eleventh birthday was in the year 1675, and therefore more than fifty years after the "Mayflower" brought the Pilgrims to Plymouth to found the first colony in New England. The account of the hardships endured by that hapless knot of adventurers in the savage waste of America stirs our patriotism more than dozens of Fourth of July orations. Only the shallow or those devoid of imagination, it seems, can belittle the inheritance gained for us by this heroic struggle.

These founders of a new nation, many of whom were delicately bred, found themselves homeless at the outset of winter in a climate of a severity to which they were unaccustomed. The sharp New England blast which is so familiar to our ears alone welcomed them to their new home.

Hubbard says that after the long passage over the vast and wide ocean, the Pilgrims were, at their first landing, "entertained with no other sights than the withered grass on the surface of the cold earth and the grim looks of savage enemies."

The old historian forgot the wolves who, according to the Pilgrims themselves, "sat on their tayles and grinned at them." But the colonists were sustained by a great purpose. For the most part New England was colonized, not by traders covetous of gain, but by a united people, who were determined to found a state where they could worship God according to their own conscience, and who carried a splendid enthusiasm into their work. When, in the spring after that first grievous winter, the "Mayflower" sailed for the Old World again, not one of the one hundred passengers she had brought with her returned thither. In truth, forty-four of these, lying in untimely graves, had no choice in the matter, and by the time the supply ship came, before

the end of the first year one half of the little company was under the sod. The colonists levelled these graves, and planted their crops over the fallen heroes, that the Indians might not suspect how their ranks were thinned. They lived in constant terror of the red men, who had fiercely assaulted them before they had settled upon Plymouth as the place for their plantation ; but in March some Indians walked boldly into their settlement, addressing them with the words “ Welcome, Englishmen.”

Massasoit, the sachem of the chief tribe of that region, now entered into friendly relations with the settlers. The compact he made with them was faithfully kept all his life long, and the bitterest of our historians could never point to a single instance of treachery in him.

By 1624 the brave little colony of Plymouth numbered one hundred and eighty persons. It led the way for those who in 1628 fled from the persecution of the English Church and began the settlement of Massachusetts Bay.

In less than twenty years after the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, the New England States, with the exception of Vermont, were settled.

In 1636 there was a bloody war between the English and the Pequots, a warlike nation occupying the territory beyond the Narragansetts. It took nearly forty years for the Indians to forget the fierce vengeance of the white men, but by 1675 a new generation of red men had been goaded into that desperate attempt to drive the English out of their land, that is known as King Philip's War; for the policy our forefathers pursued in regard to their savage neighbors was by no means lacking in provocations. "In Massachusetts," so we are told by Eccleston, "the son of a chief, Mattoonas, was accused and convicted of the murder of a white man. He was not only hanged, but his head was cut off and stuck upon a pole, where it remained for years, the colonists probably not suspecting the effect of such an exhibition on the Indians. Naturally enough,

the father of the young man thus used for a solemn example is said in Philip's war to have been 'an old malicious villain, who was the first that did any mischief within Massachusetts colony.'"

CHAPTER V.

AWASHAMOG.

A WASHAMOG, the Indian whose dusky figure had served as a warning to Alse's mother, was seeking Enoch with the confidence of long friendship. Enoch easily made friends with the Indians, not only with the partially civilized people of Natick, but also with those of the wild tribes, over whose savage nature he was said to have a charm. In truth, it was sometimes whispered, with that superstition which some few years later led to such ghastly doings, that such power could only be given him by an evil spirit; but the only witchcraft Enoch knew was that of a kind and brotherly heart. The companionship of the men of the forest he welcomed as naturally, as simply, as that of the other wild things he found there.

Enoch was often troubled by the bitterness and contempt with which his own people looked upon the Indian,—a spirit that, in the apprehension of an Indian war, was daily increasing. Had the red men historians of their own, the list of our atrocities might be longer and blacker than we suppose. As it is, one reads of deeds of our ancestors no less savage than those of the savages themselves,—such as that wanton act of flinging a pappoose into the water to prove the truth or falsehood of the proverb that an Indian is born with the ability to swim, or the atrocity of baiting with dogs an old squaw, which cruelty was perpetrated at Hadley during King Philip's War.

One of the alleged motives of the English in settling New England was the christianizing of the natives, and by 1675 a fair beginning had been made. Several towns had been established for the Praying Indians, as they were called, in which they lived, in some degree, after the manner of the English, stumbling often no doubt in that first attempt to walk in the paths of civiliza-

tion and Christianity, and with much backsliding, as we have been told. Yet Eliot, who devoted his life to their enlightenment, saw in them evidence of progress, and believed in the sincerity of their professions of fidelity to the English.

The cause of the Indians, however, does not appear to have been dear to the hearts of the Christian invaders of their land. Nor did the young men care greatly to apply themselves to the difficulty of learning the Indian language and of embracing a life of poverty on their behalf. We do not blame them, but we are grateful to those few disinterested men who made the attempt to civilize that benighted and ill-fated race over whose ruins our own prosperous nation has been built.

Having called Enoch out of the house, Awashamog led him into the thicket of trees that surrounded the settlement,

The converted Indian wore clothes similar to those of white men, and Awashamog was dressed in leather breeches, a waistcoat and a coat of

homespun. He carried a load of brooms and baskets, such as the Natick and other Christian Indians often brought for sale to the towns surrounding their own. Small success he must have had, for the load was large. In truth, he had been received everywhere with harshness, which fact Enoch rightly attributed to the bitter feeling which had been raised against his race by the rumors of war. Enoch made no explanations, but bought a basket, for which he paid with a few coins that he had been long saving; for money was scarce in the colonies, and payments were more often made in commodities. We read of rents paid in hogs or apples, and Indian corn was used as the common medium of exchange. Money, however, was given as bounties for the killing of pests: thus, blackbirds, which had become a nuisance, were paid for at the rate of sixpence a dozen; and for that "ravaging runnagadore," the wolf, a bounty of ten shillings a head was set for every one killed in the town limits. Ralph Whitehill's skill in marksmanship served him well;

but such a way of money-getting was not in Enoch's mood, and what money he had came by hard work. Yet he laid his coins in Awashamog's hand with a genial smile, saying, —

“Take cheer; the summer is almost come, and then life goes more easily. Some here in this town have already put seed in the ground. How is it with thee at Natick?”

Awashamog gloomily shook his head. He answered in his own language, saying, —

“We have planted, but we know not who will harvest our crops. Waban, our chief ruler, has the second time gone to the big chief in Boston to tell him that Philip is plotting against the English. As soon as the trees and bushes are covered with leaves,” added Awashamog, pointing to the budding maples, “the Wampanoags, with as many tribes as Philip can persuade to join him, will take the war-path.”

“Well, the big chief in Boston has listened to Waban and already taken the matter in hand. So says my father, who was this day in Boston. I

suppose there is no doubt of war, but, of a truth, 't is a sad thing when men fight each other like beasts. Let us not think of it. Dost remember, Awashamog, the time, so long ago, you took me down the river to Natick, and you and I and little Opaneweechee built a wigwam in the forest and lived there two days like the unconverted Indians? Oh, but 't was great sport we had."

"I remember," answered Awashamog, nodding his head; and a milder light shone in his gloomy eyes. With the instinct of gratitude that is the Indian's chief virtue, he recalled an incident of that time of which Enoch spoke and which was the true birthtime of his affection for him.

For once, during those days in the forest, he left the children to go some distance for ground-nuts. On returning, when still some space from them, he beheld a wolf with little Opaneweechee in his jaws, and now he re-lived that moment of helpless agony; for he had left his gun in the wigwam, and Opaneweechee was dearer to him than anything on earth. He saw Enoch stretch

his arms forth to the savage beast. Awashamog was still too far away to hear his voice; but he knew that the boy was calling to him, for, suddenly dropping Opaneweechee, the wolf walked toward Enoch, and drawing near rubbed against him, like some affectionate domestic animal. The Indian child with headlong speed then ran away, leaving his playfellow at the mercy of the wolf, whose savage nature might at any moment reassert itself. Before the power of Enoch's charm, whatever it might be, was passed, Awashamog killed the wolf, but he never forgot the peril the white child had been in for the sake of Opaneweechee. In the recollection of this incident, his grievance against Enoch's race melted away, and when they began again to talk of the war Awashamog was ready to promise that he would remain faithful to the Englishmen.

CHAPTER VI.

FORBIDDEN FINERY.

IT was a day in June; the rosebush by the door of Master Marsden's house was a mass of blossoms, and the little garden under the windows showed garden pinks, heart's-ease, and daisies in fine bloom,—these last, which now in their season whiten New England fields like snowdrifts, had been brought over from England as a garden flower by Endicott, the first governor of Massachusetts Colony. But the summer breeze, so filled with enticements as it blew softly in at the open window, could not lure Alse Whitehill from the great kitchen, where she sat in colloquy with a playmate and neighbor, Susannah King.

Susannah was seated upon the chest which held Uncle Benjamin's gift, and Alse still sat at her wheel, though her day's stent was done.

Her mother had long since taken her way into the town, and the two girls were quite alone.

“Nay,” said Alse, in answer to a question of Susannah about the silk, “never since the day ‘t was given to me have I had so much as a glimpse of it, so that I cannot be sure whether the buds that branched out of the flower that formed the pattern of it have a line of gold woven around them, or whether the firelight made it so appear; but ‘t was wonderfully rich, I warrant you. The like of it you never saw, nor I myself, nor none else beside. Why, as Ralph said, ‘t is stuff fit for a queen’s gown.”

“Oh if I might have but a look at it!” sighed Susannah, who leaned over the lid of the chest with eyes that would fain have pierced a hole through the wood to the treasure it hid.

“And truly there is little sense in hiding it there, away from the light of day,” cried Alse. “Many a time I have been minded to take it out for a moment or two. Tell me, wouldst do it, Susannah?”

"No, no, such headiness would not go long unreckoned with. Don't touch it, I pray you, Alse, though it might take but a moment and be a pleasure to think of for long after."

Susannah was the meekest of little Puritans. She had soft hazel eyes, set in a mild white face, with primly brushed pale hair. Usually she was sober, and spoke in a low, calm way, like some comfortable middle-aged matron, but she was a little excited about the silk. It seems hard that just to look at a bit of bright color should be a forbidden joy in such dull lives. Yet the little Puritans, knowing naught of other lives, had no standard by which to measure their own, and let us hope never found out how sombre and colorless they were.

"I know not what ailed my mother to hide my uncle Benjamin's gift in the chest," continued Alse. "She is not used to grudge me a pleasure. I doubt, now truly I do, if she would care, were you and I to take a peep at it. Still, perhaps 't were best to put it out of mind, eh, Susannah?"

"Was there stuff enough for a whole gown, or but a mantle?" asked Susannah, demurely.

"Oh, there were many ells of it. Enough for a whole gown, as I should judge."

"And the color was red, you say?"

"No, I did not, for 't is of many colors. I cannot on my life remember much, except that here and there in the pattern came a red color that glowed like a jewel and made the others but a setting for it. By my life now, Susannah, I *will* take a look at it."

"No, no, you must not," protested Susannah, who, of a truth, tried to hold her back whenever Alse would have caught at the temptation she kept dangling before her eyes. This time, however, Alse would have her way, and, stooping down by the chest, began to take out the contents until she reached the silk.

"It can be no harm, for we will but look at it a moment, and then away it goes again into the dark hiding-place. Ah, see now, Susannah! Is it not a sad pity to hide so brave a bit of

finery as this? Why, now, was I not right in saying 'tis of divers colors, with a rich red here and there glowing like a jewel?"

"Of a truth Ralph said well that 'tis fit for naught but a queen's gown," sighed Susannah; and she too draped the silk around her, as Alse had done, and all her young delight in gayety and bright color shone in her hazel eyes, so that it was no wonder Alse burst out:—

"The silk hath a charm, Susannah, and makes the wearer like a new creature. One could not describe it, see you, nor yet can I remember the pattern and the colors of it save in one way. There is, as you see, a monstrous lot of the stuff, so that a piece off will never be missing."

Hardly had she spoken, and before her meaning had fairly made its way into Susannah's brain, when, acting on a sudden impulse, Alse cut off a long narrow strip of the fabric.

"That is as bold a piece of mischief as ever I saw," cried Susannah, aghast. "Oh, Alse, I beg you to put the bit of silk back with the rest in

the chest, else you will bring trouble upon yourself and me too, belike, for urging you on. Yes, I did urge you on, being curious to see thy uncle's gift."

There were even tears in the little girl's eyes as she thus entreated her friend, who, as she rolled up the fabric and put it away, answered her soothingly, —

"Why, now, was ever such a fuss made for so little! Hush now, Susannah, and if 'twill serve to quiet thee, I promise ne'er to take another look at this vanity. Come, now, art thou not satisfied?"

"But the strip, Alse," said Susannah, anxiously; "you will not keep it to work mischief?"

"Nay, I 'll not keep it for that purpose," answered Alse, laughing. "I 'll keep it to put me in mind of my wickedness this day, which will therefore hinder me from doing the like again. But come, now, let us go out and enjoy this fine summer weather."

As the two girls left the house, Alse called the

gray dove that was perched in the lilacs in the dooryard.

Drusilla, as the dove had been named, was now very tame. It would coo in answer to Alse's voice, and then flutter down from its perch and alight on the child's outstretched hand. Then would Alse talk and play with it in a pretty fashion of her own, translating the bird's constant cooing into droll answers to her own questions, until finally it would settle itself to rest on her bosom and feign sleep.

On this occasion Drusilla was shy. She would not go through her programme, and in particular, in spite of all entreaty, she would not nestle upon her mistress's breast.

"Now, why is this shyness all of a sudden?" cried Alse, petulantly; "'t is a riddle, I declare."

"And here's the answer to it," said Susannah, soberly; "'t is because of the flowered silk that is hidden under your bodice. Yea, I told you 't would work mischief."

"'T is a sharp eye the dove has to see through

this stout kersey of mine. Surely, Susannah, there was never so lily-hearted a girl as you are. Well, go then, Drusilla, thou art no pet of mine, and when the supper-hour comes, 't is the great game rooster that shall have the corn from my hand. Now, Susannah, if thou art not too much afraid of the red rag in my breast, let us go together into the town."

As they now turned in that direction, they perceived that there was an unusual stir in the street. With pale faces the people stood together in knots, some speaking in subdued tones through which occasionally a voice pierced in unconquerable agitation, so that Susannah and Alse pressed curiously forward to learn the occasion of so great excitement.

A messenger had just arrived at Medfield with the news that the long-dreaded war with the Indians had begun with a horrible massacre at Swanzy, a small settlement near Mt. Hope, the headquarters of Philip. The buildings had been burned, and when the soldiers sent from Boston

arrived at the town, they found the inhabitants dead and lying about the streets, dismembered and mutilated, after the horrid manner of the savages.

These atrocities sent a thrill of horror through every town of the English. The details of the massacre passed quickly from lip to lip, losing none of their hideousness in the telling. The news reached Medfield upon a lecture day, when the people were coming from the meeting-house, so that there was an unwonted gathering in the streets.

“Swanzey is a long way from here, mother, dear; ‘t is far away,” cried Alse, seizing her mother’s gown, and looking up into her face, which had lost its pretty English color.

“A long way off, silly child!” repeated a neighbor, too overcome by fright to reassure the trembling girl. In truth, in that fearful moment when the first shock of the coming strife was felt, it would have been impossible to hide the general consternation from the children’s eyes. “Yet these bloody savages do hem us on every

side; and so treacherous are they that 'tis a question whether we are not in as great danger from our friends as from our enemies."

"Take courage, neighbor," said a good-wife of a fuller voice and stouter heart than the last



THE NEWS FROM SWANZEY.

speaker; "our troops have already gone in pursuit of the barbarous heathen, and will soon punish them for their insolence and bloody practices. Such fear, to my mind, argues a want of faith in God, who, I warrant ye, will not let the heathen triumph over His own people."

"But if, as some say, He lets loose the savages upon us to chastise us for modifying the law against the heretic and for our wicked pride in clothes, what then, goodwife?"

During this conversation poor Susannah had been standing by Alse's side, wide-eyed and pale. Now she drew her friend aside to whisper, —

"See now what mischief we have worked. 'Tis my belief that thy flowered silk has caused all the trouble."

"Now, what folly is that," cried Alse, angrily. "The massacre at Swanzey took place long ere I touched the silk. Let us keep our wits, Susannah, till the Indians have our scalps, when there will be good reason that they should part company."

She shook herself free from her timorous friend, and joined Enoch, who now came hurrying down the road, eager to overtake the knot of people from which Alse had detached herself and of which his mother made one.

"She will be beside herself with this awful

news," he had said to Ralph; "let us hasten and do what we can to cheer her."

The sight of Enoch greatly inflamed the women's excitement. They began to berate him because of his familiarity with the Indians, saying that if he did not keep a wide distance between himself and his friends, the town would take the matter in hand.

Even his mother, although she did not add her reproaches to those so showered upon him, spoke no word in his behalf, and when they had gone within, she begged him to use scant courtesy with Awashamog and others of his town.

Enoch tried to point out the distinction between the wild tribes and these poor Praying Indians, who, as events proved, were the greatest sufferers from the war between the barbarians and the English, distrusted and abused as they were by both.

"Nay, dear mother," the boy said earnestly, "these Indians do make common cause with us, and desire their fidelity shall be proved. Why,

see you, their towns, but a few miles distant from each other, do gird our settlements, and they are already making forts, where, with some of our troops to help them, they will form a defence against the enemy. I speak not from any partiality of my own, mother, but it is the advice of good Mr. Eliot and Mr. Gookin, the superintendent of the Indians, to make use of the Christian Indians and trust them."

"Speak not of it; they are ever full of treachery and deceit," cried Mrs. Marsden, for in her fear she was exceeding bitter. "They would kill us with the very arms given them for our defence;" and she fell to weeping, and Enoch, seeing she was in no condition to listen to reason, forbore to press the matter further.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEASY CONSCIENCE.

ALTHOUGH Alse Whitehill had a steadier nerve than her friend Susannah, the possession of the unlawfully gotten bit of silk sometimes caused her much uneasiness, for it was true that, as Susannah pointed out, a great many calamities followed the taking of it.

The English troops that pursued the haughty Philip drove him from Mt. Hope, but at the same time a party of Indians fell upon Dartmouth, burning many buildings and committing such barbarities upon the people as make one faint to read of. Some were roasted over slow fires, some impaled on stakes, and others flayed alive; and before the horror this excited had time to abate, Middleton and Taunton were assaulted. These towns were within the jurisdiction of Plymouth, the first colony of New England.

These depredations kept the people of Massachusetts Colony in constant alarm, and in three weeks after the massacre at Swanzey, Mendon, a small settlement of her own, was destroyed and such of the inhabitants as had not previously abandoned the place were burned by the savages. Now it was that Medfield found itself one of the outermost towns; for in 1675, at the time of King Philip's War, the territory that is now covered by thriving towns was a wilderness, only broken here and there by struggling settlements. If therefore the Connecticut River Indians and the Nipmucks were minded to follow the example of the Wampanoags, the little hamlets on the Connecticut River, from Springfield to Northfield, and Brookfield and Lancaster, the two towns of Worcester County, were in imminent danger; and as an actual fact these towns were the next to suffer.

In December it was found that the Narragansetts had broken the faith they had pledged to the white men and were assisting Philip in the

war. These Indians were gathered in great force in a swamp in Rhode Island, and it was determined by the English to break their power in his stronghold. A force of a thousand men was raised for the purpose.

There was great excitement in Boston and all the country round about. A summons was left at the house of each drafted man, and if he failed to appear, some other member of the family must take his place.

It was a great mortification to Ralph Whitehill that in his house there was not one to help chastise the barbarous foe; but his stepfather was too old for such adventure, and for himself, though he pleaded long and earnestly for permission to join the troops, it was not given him.

"No, no, no," his mother would wail in distress, "thou art but a boy,—a child forsooth. It seems but yesterday that thou wast held upon the knee to keep thee from venturing into every danger."

Then would Ralph answer scornfully, —

"A boy, mother—a child upon the knee! Look at thy nursling. Easily might he pass for a man, and I'll warrant he would make a few of those murderous red-skins bite the dust ere they had his scalp!" which speech surely was not of a kind to incline his mother's mind as he wished.

The expedition in which Ralph would have joined was successful, and the storming of the great swamp fortress of the Narragansetts was one of the most daring exploits of history. If the English could have followed up their victory, perhaps they would have soon put an end to the war, but, owing to the impenetrability of the wilderness at that season, by reason of the snow and the exhaustion of the soldiers, they disbanded, while the Indians broke up into small marauding bands, and ranged the gloomy forest ready to fall upon any defenceless settlement. In February they attacked the lovely village of Lancaster, and carried into captivity many helpless women and children. Thus cruelly exposed to the ruthless enemy lay our poor town. Cap-

tain Oakes, having come from "the grizzly sight of the ruines of Lancaster," reported that the enemy was making for Nipmuck, whereupon Mr. Wilson wrote to the governor and council setting forth the perilous position of Medfield.

"Now the rode from Nipmuck is fair for these caniballs," he wrote, "be pleased for God's sake to remember us, and let some considerable sufficient force be sent to us for our speedy relief before it is too late, by the soonest that can possibly be, lest Medfield be turned into ashes and the smoke of it amaze such as shall behold it. Oh, let not a day passe without preparations hereunto, tho' they come in the night."

A few days after this letter was written a company of eighty men under command of Captain Jacobs came marching into the distressed town amid the great rejoicing of the people. This force, together with Captain Oakes's company of twenty horsemen and seventy-five of the towns-men well armed, formed, as it seemed, a sufficient defence against the enemy.

But now, with the exception of a few persons more cautious by nature than the others, a dangerous feeling of security fell upon the inhabitants, and in particular our foolish Alse was much emboldened by the presence of the soldiery.

"Why, now, Susannah," she would say, quoting Ralph, who in turn had quoted the speech of another, "the savages will not fight face to face with the white men, never will they dare attack our town, so well guarded as it is. As for the flowered silk that you do ever point out as a mischief worker, 't is long ago since I was so foolish as to make a boast of it. Now, I promise you I should think twice before I should fall into so grievous a temptation as to open the chest."

The Sunday after the arrival of the troops was a clear warm winter's day, and for all the trouble of the times, as she went forth to the meeting-house, little Alse could not help her heart from leaping within her. It was a strange scene that met her eye. First there were the soldiers, whose buff coats and glittering breastplates and head-

pieces contrasted oddly with the sober procession of church-goers in plain Puritan garments, with their minister at their head. He was the son of Boston's first preacher, but of a generation reared under the narrow laws and stern religious belief of the Bay Colony. His countenance was of a gloomier cast, belike, than his father's. However that may be, on this especial day of his life, when from his pulpit he so seriously warned the people of their danger from too great confidence in the defence of their town, he could not have been over-cheerful. Among the sober company now and then might be seen some foolish damsel flaunting all her finery, conscious that soldiers have sharp eyes as well for a pretty woman as the uncouth forms of Indians, and no doubt dodging the eye of the titling-man, lest, as happened to many a poor girl in that day, she would be brought before the court for her "wicked apparel." But now so apprehensive had the people become, so impressed with the belief that recent calamities were a visitation of God's wrath upon them for

their sins, that dark frowns met these vain virgins on every side and even followed them into the church. Here, indeed, they were forced to listen to a terrifying discourse on the iniquities of which the people had been guilty, with frequent references to the especial sin of vanity.

Whether this too, with so many discourses of like kind before, left their obdurate hearts unmoved, or whether the flaming sword that always figured in these discourses now being more plainly visible in the destructive hordes of savages ready to rush upon their town, they were fain at length to cast off their fine apparel, is not now to be known. Be that as it may, in that hushed assembly was one who listened with remorseful terror while good Mr. Wilson's denunciations rolled overhead,—one whose heart beat quick and hard under a strip of red silk.

On coming out of the church, Alse found that the people who had preceded her own family were excitedly gazing to the westward toward two small eminences called Noon Hill and Mt. Nebo,

a fair view of which was to be had from the rising ground on which the church stood.

"Here comes one whose eyes be sharper than the ordinary," cried a good man to one of the soldiers, and pointing to Enoch. "Look, boy, and tell us if there be Indians, as we think, on yonder hills."

"Yes, surely there are," answered Enoch, turning his young eyes in the direction indicated. "I can see them plainly, though they appear but the size of ants on the smooth sides of the hills."

"And what means their presence there," cried one, "but that they mean to fall upon the town?"

The fear, however, that in the face of so many soldiers the savages would make an attack was universally derided. Only a few timorous souls shook their heads, and remembered that one night before the coming of the troops there had been a hideous baying of a kennel of wolves which had been regarded by all the town as an ill omen.

This little incident had the effect of fortifying

Alse's resolve to rid her hands and conscience of the mischief-working silk.

And in good truth it might well be called so, though never an Indian were to raise his hand against his white brother; for the greatest mischief an evil deed works is in the doer's own bosom.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ATTACK.

ALL that Sabbath Alse in vain sought an opportunity of speaking to her mother alone.

The chances for *tête-à-têtes* must have been very small in those days, when the entire family sat together in the kitchen, which the difficulty of heating rooms made a general custom. Moreover, on this occasion there were two soldiers who had been billeted to their house, and who, as it seemed, were always passing in and out. Our Puritan ancestors thought that a quiet walk on a Sabbath day partook of the nature of a mortal sin, else poor Alse might easily have drawn her mother into the open air and there relieved her conscience of its burden.

For the sense of quiet and the apprehension of a great disaster to come through her agency had

taken possession of her. Such a belief, absurd as it seems now, must have been natural enough then, when the most illogical statements of this kind were constantly made by the wisest and most learned men.

Sometimes the strain of her secret thoughts and fears was too great, and she had almost yielded to the impulse to cry out and denounce herself, even in the presence of the two grizzly soldiers who sat talking with her stepfather before the fire. But each time her native pride and strong will came to her rescue, and forced her to wait for a more fitting opportunity.

After dark she slipped out into the dooryard with the determination of burying the now hateful rag of red silk.

'T was a warm night, with soft clouds scudding over the sky, hiding and revealing a pale moon. Gentle though it was, to Alse it seemed rank with horrors. On reaching the edge of the pasture beyond the barn, she was just setting about her task when the horrible figure of a

savage stepped out of the thicket. For an instant Alse was paralyzed with terror, then fled for her life. It seemed as if her pursuer was upon her very heels; but as she looked back from the door-stone no form was visible except



that of one of the soldiers coming toward the house from another direction.

“ Indians ! Indians ! ” cried Alse.

Having taken a quick glance around the peaceful dwelling, the soldier laughed and patted her blanched cheek.

“ What dost thou at thy age abroad so late ? ”

he said kindly. "'T was thy fear thou saw, child, and no Indian."

Nor could he be persuaded to give any different interpretation to her story.

But one may be sure Alse stirred no more that night from the fireside.

Having slept the deep sleep of healthy childhood, Alse awoke early on that fatal Monday morning.

She lay warm and happy in her trundle-bed, for her fear had passed with the drifting night shadows. The familiar sounds of the cocks' crowing, of the cooing of Drusilla, and the lowing of the cattle made the thought of the Indian figure of the previous evening seem remote and unreal. Yet though she was no longer urged to it by fright, she meant to heed the warning of Susannah and the voice of her own conscience.

Nay, Indians or not, she had no wish to grow vain and trifling, and though of a truth rich apparel pleased her fancy, it was as naught compared with the graces of a good and pure heart.

A dear, true, happy child, she lay there, when suddenly the voices of Ralph and Enoch, whose office it was to go out early to the barn and feed the cattle, roused the household with cries of fire.

For the town was even now swarming with the hideous savages, buildings aflame, and the terrified people flying for their lives to the garrisons.

Immediately the Marsden family were in the street, making for the house of Master Wilson, which had been fortified as strongly as possible for such an attack. The secret stairway constructed for just such an emergency, now, as a means of escape, failed to inspire any confidence, except to Enoch, whose earnest entreaties that they should remain in their own house rather than trust to the chance of reaching a garrison were disregarded. Alse found herself pulled out of the house into the gray morning; and what a sight the dawning light revealed!

“Run, Alse, run!” she heard her mother cry. “Do not wait for me. Thou canst run fast. Run!”

Once she looked back and beheld Enoch and Ralph dragging their mother forward. Next she saw a number of persons issuing from a neighbor's house. Like herself, they were running to the garrison; but presently one among them shrieked and fell. Alse had heard the bullet whizzing past her on its fatal errand. Then a cloud of smoke from a burning building blinded her.

"Mother! mother!" screamed the child in terror.

For answer there was a hideous yell, she found herself seized and carried away she knew not whither. No choice had she but to flee with the furious savage.



CHAPTER IX.

IN THE WILDERNESS.

GREATLY rejoicing in the destruction of another of the enemies' settlements, the Indians encamped on a hill west of the river in plain sight of the poor distressed town. Here they built a great fire, and after killing one of their captives, who angered them with her cries, threw her body into the flames. A piteous lesson it was to others to endure in silence their hard fate. After this, Alse dared not so much as utter one complaint.

The chill air of the early morning benumbed her body, but her mind was awake to the keen anguish of a prisoner in the hands of a savage enemy. She was quite weak from the violent beating of her heart, which her fright caused, and though so cold, she dared not approach the fire, for fear of these bloody wretches, who were now

preparing to roast an ox which they had taken from the town, and were hooting and dancing as was their fiendish manner after a victory.

When the meat was done, the Indian who had captured her, and who was now her master, offered her a small piece; but Alse was too wretched to eat,—an abstinence she afterwards regretted.

Every story of Indian captivity which she had ever heard came back to torture her. While she was sitting thus, with white woebegone face over which the tears were silently streaming, one of the Indians came and asked her why she wept.

“I shall be killed!” the child cried, overmastered by her terror, which the approach of the Indian increased a hundred fold. But his answer for the time checked this fear; for he assured her that if she would go willingly with them and not try to escape, she would not be hurt.

From the moment Alse had felt the clutch of those savage arms, the hope of finding a chance to escape had never for a moment been out of mind. Now a realization of the danger of recap-

ture forced her to relinquish this hope. Yet she would not despair while the Indians tarried here, so near the town, and where at any moment, it seemed, they might be overtaken by the English soldiers. The apparent danger the Indians were running in this situation astonished her, for she did not know that, to prevent pursuit, they had burned the bridges over the lagoons made by the two rivers outside the town. She took comfort from the thought of Ralph's dogged resolution, and the marvellous ingenuity of Enoch, and the love which would drive them after her into the wilderness.

She was stout of heart, our Alse, for after the first shock and terror of capture, she grieved much for the anguish of her poor mother, and would say bravely to herself,—

“ ‘T is a mercy ’t is I and not she that is now in this plight, for never was any one so affrighted of an Indian as my mother. Sure, her soft heart would faint were she in the midst of this savage crew.”

Even now, beside those tears that she shed for herself, were many also for the poor mother, frantic, as she well knew, at the thought of her child in such hands in the rough unsearchable wilderness.

After the horrors of that day, a night fell that was yet more doleful. It grew colder rapidly, for the wind changed from the south and came shrieking from the northwest, as if in league with the cruel demons around her. Alse had been hurried out of the house without proper protection against the chill winter morning. What would she not give for her good camlet cloak lined with red duffel, and so warm that many a sunny winter's day, were she but going to some near neighbor's, she had been loath to wear it. And oft it happened, when a chill wind came up, her mother had sent Ralph or Enoch with the cloak to bring her home,—so careful had they been of her. And now the tender girling must lie all the night through on the frozen ground, with no coverlet unless the snow should make one.

A doleful night indeed! Wolves bayed, and the half-human creatures around the fire howled and danced till a late hour, in their joy at the misery they had caused. If for a moment Alse slept, 't was to waken with suffocating fright as her eyes unclosed upon the wild and horrible scene. Indeed, she had need of all her native cheerfulness and courage in this plight, and her hope rose and fell like the fitful firelight in the wind.

In the early morning the Indians set out from that place, all day they journeyed through swamps and woods, impassable to all save the



aborigines. Often they waded through icy brooks and climbed steep hills. When, in the bitterness of her rage or from exhaustion, Alse held back, her master, a big surly savage, drove her onward with the handle of his hatchet.

All the food they had plundered in the town was wasted, and they made no provision for the journey. The Indian is accustomed to long marches without food, but the delicate women and children they have carried into captivity have ever suffered cruelly with hunger. So it was with poor Alse. A few ground-nuts must suffice for the whole day,



and at night, after the weary travel, she dared not ask for the food she so sorely needed, lest a knock on the head would be given her by her angered master.

At last one day, as they were travelling, the Indians began to whoop in a manner very terrifying to the captives, in their ignorance of what such an outcry portended.

It was the scalp halloo, as 'twas called, by which a returning party signify to the camp from which they have set out on some work of destruction, their victory and the number of scalps they have taken.

They were soon answered by a similar whooping, until the forest rang with hideous yells. In a short time they reached the camp,—where a great company of savages surrounded them, asking questions and exulting over their horrible work. With these Indians, who were the same band that had fallen upon Lancaster, were a number of English captives, the mere sight of whom, for all they were as helpless as herself, was a comfort to Alse.

Among this company were the wife and children of Alse's master, and she became the servant of this old squaw. The young savages surpassed their father in cruelty. If it were cold, no matter how much spare room there might be around the fire, they would not suffer her to approach it, and often at night they would push her out of the wigwam and leave her to the chance of the hospitality of some more kindly natured Indians than themselves. They delighted to offer her food and when she would put forth her hand to receive it, snatch it away. Once, impelled by the fierce pain of hunger, she succeeded in seizing a bit of bear's meat which was held out to her on the end of a stick, and would have run off with it had she not been caught by the Sannup, her master, who threatened to kill her if she ever did the like again.

Of a truth, the Indians themselves were now in hard straits for food, and the life of the captives hung in a balance between their masters' desire of ransom-money and the incon-

venience of providing food enough to keep them alive.

Having made many a day's hard journey, the Indians at length reached the Connecticut River, on the opposite side of which was King Philip and a great crew of heathens.

During this war the name of Philip, the sachem of the Wampanoags, was one to conjure with. As he was never seen in any encounter, and was only visible in his foul work, he was dreaded as an invisible malignant spirit would be. When Alse heard that on crossing the river they were to join the fierce Wampanoags with Philip at their head, she was sorely afraid, and when her turn came trembled so violently that it was with the utmost difficulty she got into the canoe.

On landing on the opposite shore, the Indians were found to be gathered together in great numbers; and so oppressed was Alse by the sight of so many savages that she believed that the English troops would never conquer them.

Most formidable they looked, their faces painted

in various styles. Some in vermillion, others with one side of the face in white, the other in black, and wearing turkey or eagle feathers in the hair. One old chief was especially hideous with deer-horns dyed red, and worn across the head like a crescent. Afraid to move, almost to breathe, Alse sat in a heap on the ground, with heart beating like some poor snared bird, while these wild, uncouth creatures came and looked at her. Among the others came Philip's son, Metacumsett, a little lad of nine years. He was straight as an arrow, and he had the black and flashing eyes of his race. There was nothing to distinguish the sachem's son from the other Indian boys, except the strings of wampun beads around neck and waist, and a long knife which he handled with pride, and which, no doubt, had once been the property of some Englishman who had fallen under the fatal tomahawk.

Having looked long, with evident approval, at Alse, the little fellow went away, and, returning,

brought a few ground-nuts and a handful of samp which, with many protestations of friendship, he offered her; but she, poor child, having been so often tantalized by like offers that meant nothing, would not touch the food, much as she longed for it; whereupon he set his offering down upon the ground beside her, and again went away.

The kindness of the lad, and the refreshment of this meagre meal, much revived the little girl's courage.

In truth, so cheerful and courageous was Alse's temper, and so well she kept the natural sunny sweetness of her smile, that soon she won the favor of the Indians, who called her Wanolasset, — the-little-one-who-laughs, — and she was treated with less harshness than others, who, by their continuous grieving, angered their brutal masters.

Yet she had much to endure. Her master was of a passionate temper, and when matters went ill with him, he would visit his anger upon his poor captive. When he was in great strait for

food, then was he more cruel than at other times, and as food became more and more scarce, it well behooved her to keep out of reach as much as possible.

What with hard travelling, scant food, and much exposure to the cold, Alse lost somewhat of her vigorous strength. If an Indian wandered but a few miles from his wigwam, it was his custom to carry with him all his miserable possessions. A big load of such merchandise must be carried by every captive, which added much to the wearisomeness of travel.

One day as they were setting forth, so outrageous a load was given to Alse that she could scarcely stagger under its weight. As kicks and blows were the only arguments her master ever used, she did not complain, but started forward with the others with as much patience as she could. But so often she fell behind, thus forcing her master to go back and drive her onward, that at length he declared he would kill her at once, rather than be hindered by her

weakness; and perhaps in his anger he would have done so had not fear lent its strength to Alse, who went on again quickly with her load.

At noontime they came to a steep hill. The sides of it were coated with ice, on which Alse continually slipped, so that many a fall she had that day. Sometimes, to add to the difficulties of the way, her master's children flung snow in her eyes, and blinded her so that she struck against trees or bushes. Then such a shouting there was by those merciless little savages.

But suddenly, when she was at the end of her endurance, and believed that she must now die, for even at the urging of her master's tomahawk she could go no further, her tormentors were put to rout, and she saw the little son of Philip with his flashing knife. At first she believed that he, too, meant to do her mischief, but instead of that, he took half of her load, and, giving her his hand, helped her on. Had it not been for this timely aid, it would have been impossible for her to have completed this day's journey.

Now in this circuitous and aimless march, the Indians were plainly trying to evade the English, rather than acting from any plan. Up and down the wilderness they wandered, famine-stricken and disheartened, yet able still to hold out and harry the enemy.

Instead of meeting a foe in fair fight, Indian warfare is always by ambuscade and surprise. Often by feigning retreat, they led a small band of the English into their power. For the tricks of a forest war were but slowly learned by the white men, who marched in closed ranks, enabling the savages in their hiding-place to reckon their strength at a glance, and easily mow them down, while they looked in vain for their enemy. The Indian village could gather up its skirts, as it were, and flee before an attacking party; but the English towns were at the mercy of the scattered bands of infuriated Indians, who, after the destruction of the Narragansett fort, homeless, hungry, and vengeful, wandered through the forests.

Many a time at night, Alse listened with a beat-

ing heart while one went about yelling and hallooing to give notice that there was a murderous attack planned on some poor, unsuspecting town. Then would the Indians grind corn or ground-nuts, or collect what they could for provisions for the journey, and in the morning away they would go.

And ever, it seemed to Alse, the result of the expedition was the same. For when the returning party was within ear-reach, then would she hear the scalp halloo, — a long yell for each scalp or prisoner they had taken, and at the end of that quick, ear-piercing shouts of triumph — always triumph. Then would they come quickly with their hideous exultation, showing the scalps they had taken, and hooting, dancing, and singing in their fiendish joy. Often they brought captives doomed to suffer, perhaps to die of torture. And many a sight unfit for childish eyes was Alse forced to look on.

It is well our forebears had the stout hearts and healthy nerves of a strong race, else few would

have survived the shock that is even yet perhaps reverberating in the nervous race who now enjoy the conquered land.

One morning the Indians came to a stream. Many followed it on rafts or in canoes, but Alse, with some of the Indian children, ran along on the shore.

Alse had by this time gained sufficient knowledge of the language to understand what was said to her, and now she overheard the children say:

"She eats so much her master is going to knock her on the head. Come, let us save him the trouble, and throw her into the river."

Then poor Alse tried to hide herself; but they quickly found her, and, dragging her to the river, forced her to go on with them till they came to a high rock. From this rock the young Indians, with great force, flung her into the stream; but she was able to keep her head above water, by hanging on to the bushes that overhung the river. Seeing this, the little heathens got sticks, and struck her till she let go her hold, and would have

drowned, if help had not come, in the form of Philip's boy, who, scattering the children, helped her up again on to the bank.

Although Alse did not know whether the children had spoken the truth in regard to her master's intention, or but wished to frighten her, she was greatly troubled.

That night, although nearly famished, she dared not ask him for food, lest it would anger him, and remind him of his evil purpose; but she went out and begged a little samp of an old squaw who had sometimes been kind to her.

On coming back to the wigwam, she found her master with Philip's son. He was trying Metacumsett's knife on a piece of wood, and, believing that he had borrowed it but to carry out his cruel intention, she would have run away. But the sannup called her to come to him, and told her that he had sold her for the knife, and she must go away with her new master.

Then the boy took her hand and led her away to his father's wigwam. Here he gave her food,

and Wootonekanuske, his mother, spread a deer-skin before the fire for her to sleep on, and when she had lain down upon it, covered her feet with another, so that she was warm and comfortable all night.

With this change of masters, Alse's captivity became more endurable. The boy was kind to her, and angry if any one used her ill. Wootonekanuske also treated her well. At first, Alse greatly feared Philip, but in time, as he did her no harm, even this fear faded away.

At last Alse heard that a letter had been sent from the Council at Boston about the redemption of the captives, and soon after the Indians started for Mt. Wachusett, where it was supposed some among them would be redeemed.

It was a sorry journey to that mountain; but not a white captive in the company but travelled the whole distance with a cheerful heart. And now it seemed, when they were fain to go quickly, the Indians went at their slowest pace, stopping often, sometimes two nights at a time.

Before she had exchanged her old master for the present one, Alse had been continually asked by the Indians how large a ransom would her friends give for her, but from that time all such question ceased. Now, with great anxiety, she asked it of herself, for all her hopes were set on this last chance, as it seemed, of release.

When they had come to Mt. Wachusett, a second letter from the Council at Boston about the captives was brought to this company by two of the Natick Indians, who were glad to show their loyalty to the English by acting as commissioners.

There was now great discussion among the Indians as to whether they should let the captives go. A large number of them (especially among the Nipmucks, who were discouraged, and overawed by the white men, and wished therefore to conciliate the Council at Boston) were in favor of accepting the ransoms; but the fierce Wampanoags wished to make no concessions, and of these the sachem Philip was the most obstinate.

The matter was the occasion of a bitter quarrel; but many of the captives at that time were redeemed by their friends, and went away rejoicing.

At length the commissioners came to redeem Alse Whitehill, for whom her uncle and step-father had offered a large ransom; and now at last Alse hoped that her captivity was over; but Philip rejected with scorn all offers, and sent a discourteous and haughty message to the Governor and Council, to the effect that the white men had not money enough in the whole colony of Massachusetts to buy one hair of the white child's head, and when the messenger went away, he sent for Alse, telling her that she was now to be adopted into their tribe, and be as one of themselves.

CHAPTER X.

BALKED BY THE ENEMY.

WHEN Alse's mother reached the garrison on that fatal morning, and found her child not there before her, she would willingly have gone forth again to look for her; but the doors were barred, and none permitted to go out. Like a crazy thing she walked up and down, up and down, among the people, begging them to let her go to her child's rescue. In vain her husband and her sons sought to make her see the uselessness of such an attempt, and to quiet her, for their words seemed to bear no more meaning to her poor brain than if they been spoken in an unknown tongue.

Enough has been said: the torture of a mother whose child is in the hands of a barbarous enemy is what no pen can write.

When the Indians had left the town, and the people all went forth again, such lamentation as there was at the waste and destruction that met their anxious eyes! Nearly half of the buildings were destroyed; but the house of Master Marsden, though situated at the west end of the town where the greatest damage had been done, was unharmed, and as Ralph and Enoch led their mother thither, it wore its usual air of peaceful comfort, even Alse's dove was cooing on its perch in the lilacs. The dove's notes seemed such a mockery of the agony of her own heart, that the poor mother fell to weeping again.

Fortunate it was for her that she could not occupy her mind solely with her own troubles, for there were the wounded to be nursed, and the homeless to be provided for.

Having left their mother within the house, Ralph and Enoch went into the town. They were eager to find the soldiery, and to see why they did not push on after the enemy.

"There is no more now to be said," cried

Ralph. "I shall join the troops and search for our dear Alse."

"Nay," answered Enoch, "remember that thy mother has already lost one child. She can ill bear to lose another."

"'T was she herself did bid me go and bring my sister home."

"Yes; but as thee knows well, she was beside herself with grief, and knew not what she said."

Hurrying on, the two lads came upon the soldiers, who had stopped at the river, balked by the burned bridges. One of them had taken from a post this notice:—

"Know by this paper that the Indians that thou hast provoked to wrath and anger will war these 21 years if you will. There are many Indians yett. We come three hundred at this time. You must consider that the Indians lose nothing but their lives. You must lose your fair houses and cattle."

"Why do you not follow the insolent savages and punish them?" cried Ralph, to one of the soldiers. "There was big talk awhile ago that a

white man is equal to fifteen Indians. By my life, it doth not this day so appear."

"Ay, but they have always some advantage over us — the crafty heathen. See now how hindered we be!"

"Hindered? Mercy on us, the Indians would have crossed the river on rafts, while ye have hemmed and hawed over it. Yes, I'd sooner swim over to the other bank than be so defied and mocked and beaten by a party of savages."

"The boy is hot for revenge," said the soldier to another as Ralph walked on; "and why not, since his sister has been carried off by the vile fiends?"

The town was still under some apprehension, and sent to the Governor again for help. The following day Captain Turner with sixty-four men reached Medfield. Among the soldiers was one very ill, and, Master Wilson's house being full, he was brought to Master Marsden's.

Hardly was the man in bed before Ralph was dressed in his clothes, and presented himself to

Captain Turner with the petition to be allowed to take the sick man's place.

There was no time to waste, and the boy was enrolled. In a few hours he had taken leave of his mother, and, with the sanction of his stepfather, joined the troops.

"Thou wilt take care of our mother," he said to Enoch, who went with him to the camp, "for thou art a dear true brother; and do not fret because 't is I, instead of you, who go to our sister's rescue."

"No; I shall not fret because of that," said Enoch, with a quiet smile.

"'T is thy task, being of a gentler mould than I, since our father is growing old, to look after the affairs of our home, and, above all, to keep our mother in as cheerful spirits as may be."

"Why, now, 't is beyond the power of any of us to do much for her in that sort," answered Enoch. "Her thoughts are in the wilderness with our dear pigeon, and no word reaches her. Have you not noticed, Ralph, how she answers

us at random? The dear mother! Yea, I am greatly troubled for her, and I need no bidding to do what I can for her welfare. In the bygone years, Ralph, many a night when thou hast been sleeping soundly by my side, I have prayed with tears for a chance to serve her, not only out of mere love, but in gratitude for the kindness and great and wonderful affection which she has ever shown me. Never can I forget how once she gave Alse to me for a sister. Oh, Ralph, if I could now but bring Alse back to her, would not that be a joyful way of showing the love and loyalty I feel for thy mother?"

"Yes, Enoch; but 't is a deed not in thy mood. Think no more of it. But keep a stout heart, for we shall find Alse."

CHAPTER XI.

A DISTRACTED MIND.

WHEN, having parted with Ralph, Enoch went home, he found his mother on her knees before the oaken chest in the kitchen, seeking among her store for linen to give to those whose supply had been burned with their dwellings. She was hindered in her task by the blinding tears that streamed continually from her eyes. Coming to the flowered silk, she took it gently out, and stroked the inanimate thing as if the form of her child were still beneath it. So piteous she looked that, stooping down by the chest, Enoch put his arm around her, and he also stroked the silk, while they looked at each other with the same thought,—that of the child's beauty and happiness as she stood in the fire-light with the rich-tinted silk gathered about her.

"She was ever fond of a bright color," said Mistress Marsden, softly; "but not too fond, eh, Enoch, lad? Thou wouldst not say that she was over-fond of vanities?"

She asked the question eagerly, as if troubled by some secret fear.

"No, that I would not," answered Enoch, with decision.

"I have feared lest her beauty be a snare to the child," said the mother.

"She has too much heart and good wit for that, mother. She is no vain shallop, and cares not for her little braveries over and beyond the pleasure she takes in their pretty colors and shapes, and thinks not what a fair witch she looks in them. I well remember a certain hood she once had. 'T was sent to her, as I think, by her relatives in Boston."

"Yes, a silk hood it was, of a sweet color. The selectmen of the town took notice of the hood, it being of silk, and so against the law for persons of ordinary condition; but 't was at last decided

that our family, being of a better education and estate than the most, was among those for whom exception is made by the law, and so thy sister wore the hood, though but a few times; for thy father, as thee knows, does not favor any extravagance in clothes."

"Well, mother dear," Enoch went on, eager to draw her mind from her trouble, and rejoiced that she could listen and speak in so rational a way, "I remember one day when you took Alse with you to Master Wilson's house. Some great occasion it was, though I forget now what, and she wore the hood. As she came thence I fell in with her, and on my life she was a fair sight, with her eyes so soft and dark, and her cheek like the damask rose; and so dazzled I was that I forgot your wish and said, —

"'There is no face in the town that would not be ugly by the side of thine.' Nay, do not blame me, mother. 'T was not flattery, for the words flew out like a bird. And now what think ye Alse did, but draw a hideous face in return for my fair speech.

“ ‘Tis the silk hood,’ said she, ‘t would make the ugliest face look well. And thou art but a bat, brother, else thou wouldest see that the most beautiful face in the town is that of our mother. It irks me that she doth go about clad in such dull apparel. Could I have my way, ’t is she and not I that would wear all the finery that my uncle sends. Yet since she hath no will to wear them, see you,’ she said, with a toss of her head, ‘they shall not go a-begging.’ As for Alse’s beauty, which of a truth no one can resist, maybe, mother dear, ’t will serve her a good turn even among the savages.”

“ You say that but to comfort me; for what avails the loveliest grace to one in the power of a vile savage? Oh, Enoch, mine is the sorrow which a mother cannot bear and live.”

The next day another affliction fell upon the Marsden house, for a strange illness came upon the mistress of it, defying the skill of the surgeon, and putting the family and attendants to their wits’ end to alleviate her suffering. For it was

the poor mind that ailed, and she that was so gentle and loving by nature became peevish or violent, blaming this one or that for her affliction.

Sometimes it was Ralph, who she declared cared for naught but the excitement of a soldier's life, and had no thought for his sister. Again, 't would be herself she blamed for sending Alse on before her that fatal morning to the garrison. But more often, and with bitterest anger, it was Enoch whom she reproached for delaying them with his entreaties that they would remain in their own house, rather than trust themselves in the town. And then, when he would prove to her that his advice had been good, she would rail at him for having been a friend of the treacherous enemy, so that, as 't was said, their house was spared because of the amity the Indians had for him. And though Enoch knew it was her poor distraught mind that was answerable for her anger, and that when she would be her true self again she would blame him for nothing, each speech cut him like a knife.

One day the surgeon coming in while she was railing at Enoch, he sent him forthwith out of her room, saying that he but made her the worse ; and this the poor boy thought was the bitterest word yet. Still, though the thought that his presence injured his dear mother was truly grievous, it was a relief in one way, as it helped him to decide on a matter that had long been in his mind, and very shortly he told the surgeon that, as he could do nothing for his mother, he should go, as he had always wished to do, in pursuit of Alse.

“ How now ! ” cried the surgeon, aghast, as he well might be, at this plan, “ is our cause in such straits that it must have the help of boys ? Already is there a force of many thousand men in the field.”

“ I go upon my own adventure, and not with the soldiery,” said Enoch.

“ Think not twice of such a bold thing. Why, boy, ’t is but to throw your life away, and truly, if you do not promise me forthwith to give up the plan, I must discover it to Master Marsden.”

"Already have I obtained his consent," said Enoch. "I have told you of my intention only that you can use the knowledge of it for my mother's good. I doubt not the hearing of it will please her well. As for my safety," Enoch went on, "she will not be concerned about that, for, as you know, she can think of but the one thing. Never once, to my knowledge, hath she grieved for the hazard Ralph runs in this war. Then will she not be concerned for me. And, on my word, I have no fear for myself."

"What is your plan, boy?" asked the surgeon, seeing that he was foiled in his purpose to hinder him from attempting this adventure.

"'T is not in ready shape to lay before you," was the adroit reply, for, knowing that it would only meet with discouragement and derision, Enoch had no intention of submitting his plan to any one.

Thinking that Enoch was not yet ready to set out, the surgeon, who had work enough on his hands at that time, no doubt, gave no more

thought to the matter, and the next day he was horrified to hear that the boy was already on his way.

In regard to his mother, it fell out exactly as Enoch predicted, and the knowledge that he was in search of Alse served much to comfort her.

“A clever lad he is, and a marvellous charm he hath over the Indians, that I have long known,” she would say, and perchance add tenderly,—

“He was always the dearest, lovingest boy a woman ever sought to be a mother to,” which speech, could he but have heard it, would have mighty encouraged the poor fellow as he set forth on his dubious search.

CHAPTER XII.

A BOLD DESIGN.

IT was a cloudy morning toward the end of winter when Enoch started upon his bold adventure. The sun would not give countenance to it, and the wind opposed it with all its might. The thorny vines clung to him, and the bushes spitefully choked the way.

For the prosecution of his plan, Enoch had first to secure the service of some trusty Indian. Many such he knew among those who were formerly at Natick, but now trouble had fallen upon this people, who had been forced to leave their town, their comfortable wigwams, and all their possessions, and had been conveyed to Deer Island till the war should be over. This sorry measure was forced upon the magistrates by the clamor of the people, whose anger was stirred

against them by the atrocities practised by the hostile tribes, and by the perfidy of many who professed themselves friendly, only to betray the English when a fair opportunity presented itself. Such instances of infidelity, however, usually occurred among the new converts.

At the beginning of the war, a number of the Christian Indians were made use of in the English army, acquitteding themselves as "honest and stout men," for which we have the word of the officers under whom they served. They were also used as spies and guides, and there is no instance recorded where they proved treacherous. But so great was the prejudice of the common people toward them, that the Governor and



Council were forced to disband them, after which they were confined in their own villages, and afterward imprisoned on the islands in the harbor. To illustrate the rancor of the white men, it is told by Gookin, that after the massacre at Medfield, when, by reason of the burned bridges, they were not able to come at the enemy who perpetrated the foul outrage, there was a plot on foot among some of the English, to go down to Deer Island and kill, in revenge, these innocent praying Indians.

Beside the company at Natick, Enoch also had friends among the Hassanamesit or Marlborough Indians. This people had suffered much from misapprehension. Fifteen of them, on a false charge, had been chained together, neck to neck, and taken in this sort to trial in Boston, where eleven of them remained in prison for some weeks under great suffering. In the November of 1675, the hostile Indians fell upon these at Hassanamesit who were gathering their corn into barns. As the enemy counted three hundred and them-

selves but one hundred and fifty, and as they (as all other friendly tribes) had been forced to give up the arms and ammunition that at the beginning of the war had been furnished them for their defence against the common enemy, they yielded to arguments of their captors which could not be denied. For it is true that whenever a stack of hay or an out-building was burned, they were suspected and punished by the English, and the remembrance of what some of their number had already suffered, and the chance that they might be imprisoned as the Natick Indians were, or even sold out of the country as slaves, determined them to cast their lot with their own race. "And perhaps," as their historian quaintly says, "if Englishmen and good Christians, too, had been in their case, and under like temptations, possibly they might have done the same."

The case of these poor souls is best put in the words of their pastor, Joseph Tuckapanellen, to Mr. Eliot.

"Oh, sir, I am greatly distressed this day on

every side; the English have taken away some of my estate, my corn, cattle, my plough, cart, chain, and other goods. The enemy Indians have also taken a part of what I had; and the wicked Indians mock and scoff at me, saying: ‘Now what is become of your praying to God?’ The English also censure me and say I am a hypocrite.”

It happened that about this time there was much discussion in the General Council concerning the imprisoned Indians on Deer Island, some contending that they should all be destroyed, and others that they should be sent out of the country; but there were also milder measures advocated, for it was remembered by some that they had a covenant with the English for mutual protection. By that agreement they put themselves under the government of Massachusetts, promising to be true and faithful subjects. Upon searching the records, not one case could be found in which they had broken any part of it, so that instead of carrying out the harsh meas-

ures of the more prejudiced party, the General Court decided to make use of some of them as guides, which accorded well with their desire to show their loyalty.

Accordingly, six were chosen for this part, fitted with arms, and taken to Marlborough, where Major Savage, with a force of six hundred men, was encamped.

Having heard of these things, Enoch set out in the direction of Marlborough. It was a long distance from Medfield to this place, and there was danger of meeting bands of the savages, who might be lurking in the forest, ready to fall upon any wayfarer. He reached his destination, however, without adventure of this sorry sort.

It was on the edge of night that he first came in sight of the town that had been the scene of so much carnage and strife. A rude house on the outskirts of the town which, owing to its defenceless position, was abandoned in the beginning of the war, offered itself as a shelter; and Enoch, too weary to go farther that night, joy-

fully availed himself of it. He was hungry, having early in the day eaten the last of the provisions he had brought with him ; but he was too tired to look for food, and, lying down on some pine-branches that had probably served some former wayfarer in like manner, he fell asleep, and so soundly that on wakening he gazed long about the strange, bare room before he could remember how he came there.

He was conscious of two things, a murmuring noise, on the outside of his habitation, and the voice of hunger that called him imperatively to get up and secure a breakfast.

Enoch therefore raised himself upon the pine-boughs, with an effort to realize his situation. At that moment the murmuring noise came near enough to be recognized as the human voice, and by the time the boy had hidden himself under the boughs, two men came into the house.

One, by his uniform, was evidently an English officer,—a stout, purple-faced, choleric personage,

who walked up and down with his hands behind him, while, in a gruff English voice, he said, —

“A sorry set o’ magistrates have we, by my faith. With such a set of tender consciences ’t will be many a long day before we get the better of the savages. Yea, the worthy gentlemen occupy themselves in mousing over the records for a warrant for putting the praying Indians out of harm’s way, when every day of the Lord have they thrown warrant enough in our faces. Now, after the onslaught on Medfield and Lancaster, comes news of Sudbury. Verily,” he added, in a tone of grim humor, “’t is time that another law should be passed, touching the sort of apparel our women should wear.”

“I am of your mind in this matter, Captain,” interrupted the second man, who had listened with impatience to this harangue; “yet ’t was not for this bluster I brought you hither, but to confer with you on what touches us more closely. I mean of the liberty that hath been given to Job

Kattenanit by the Council, to meet with those Indians at Hassanamesit."

"How is that? I have heard naught of it," said the first speaker, in so bitter a voice that Enoch rejoiced that he had not acted on his first impulse to discover himself to these men, who he now saw would not aid nor abet him in a project that included the employment of a friendly Indian.

"Why, now, this Job Kattenanit, it appears, was the Indian who, with the squaws and children, escaped from the hands of the hostile savages that fell upon Hassanamesit, and ever since he hath made hue and cry to recover his children, whom Philip's men took away with them. Well, then, it appears that while on service as spy at Mt. Wachusett, he made an agreement with some of the Christian Indians among the enemy to meet them at a certain place where they would bring, with other English captives, the three children of Job; and now he hath the consent of Major Savage and Major-General Dennison to go and fetch them."

"'T is of a piece with all the rest," said he who was addressed as Captain, and who was, in truth, the rough old privateersman and Indian hater, Mosely, who is said never to have been worsted in any engagement with the enemy. "But I'll undo this work, or I'll serve the country no more. Come ye, it behooves us not to dilly-dally here."

"But already hath Job set forth," said the Captain's companion. "'T is late in the day now to stop the business."

"Nay, 't is not too late, if one hath any heart in the matter, as I mean to prove to ye; only we must lose no time in pursuing the rogue, who, no doubt, means to furnish information against us to Philip."

Immediately, as the two men left the house, Enoch sprang to his feet, with the hope that if he could but join Job, and warn him of the intended pursuit, they could succeed in reaching the spot where he was to meet his friends, and from them he could perhaps discover the whereabouts of Alse.

Enoch judged that with full liberty from the Council, and the permission of those in command at Marlborough, Job would not feel the need of great haste; and he counted upon his own fleetness to overtake him before the soldiers should have gone far in pursuit. Yet since man is but an engine whose progress depends upon the fuel it burns, he must stop for a fresh supply of food.

Having proceeded but a few steps toward the town, he saw coming toward him a party of five Indians. As they went openly, he knew they must be those who, with Job, had been sent to serve as guides. Among them were two Natick Indians, well known to him, and who greeted him with a joyful confidence that proved how rarely they found a real friend among the white men.

They would have him sit down and listen, while they narrated all the trouble which they had passed through; but, though not lacking in sympathy, Enoch must refuse them this poor consolation.

Having heard the strait he was in, they set

about helping him according to their means. Each had a day's allowance of provisions; for on reaching Marlborough, though they had come but to do the townspeople service, they were received with such insults by them that they would not go within any house, but ate and slept in the outer air. Of this allowance of food they gave Enoch enough to last for two days' journey. They then showed him in which direction Job had started for the meeting-place.

This adventure saved Enoch much time; and as he started upon the right track and went quickly, he overtook Job upon the evening of the same day. Between the danger of surprise by Philip's Indians and the danger of meeting suspicious English, Job was travelling cautiously; but, recognizing Enoch, he welcomed him with joy, and, having been acquainted with his errand, the two proceeded cheerfully together.

This journey, however, proved fruitless for each; for, having arrived at the meeting-place, they failed to find Job's friends. They would gladly

have pushed on nearer the enemy's quarters; but Job thought that he was bound to return to the English army, and, remembering the suspicions of Mosely, and how ready the English were to suspect treachery in an Indian, Enoch forbore to press his own wish, and so, greatly disappointed, they turned back to Marlborough.

They nearly reached the town without meeting any of the men Mosely had sent out to capture Job; but when within a few miles of the camp they came face to face with an English soldier. Enoch at once recognized the soldier as his own brother.

"And how, by all that's odd, dost thou come here?" cried Ralph, as the two joined hands; while Job, conscious of no fault, stood quietly watching the meeting.

"Surely you can guess the only errand that would bring me hither," answered Enoch.

"Dost mean *thou* art in search of our sister?" asked Ralph, with perhaps an unconscious emphasis on the pronoun that was neither compli-

mentary nor encouraging. "'T is foolishness, for thou art too soft of heart to succeed in this business and so should leave it to me. Tell me, what hast thou gained?"

"I have gained nothing—as yet. Mayhap thou art right and I should have left the business to thee, who art so much more able. Then tell me quickly, brother, what hast *thou* gained? Where is our sweet pigeon? Is she already in thy keeping? What hast thou gained?"

"Well, nothing at all," admitted Ralph, with a slight blush. "Yet we have hope of success through the efforts of Mr. Rowlandson, whose wife and children were taken captive at Lancaster, and who hath petitioned the Council to send a messenger, who is already on the way to treat with the savages about redeeming the captives. Mr. Rowlandson hath offered twenty pounds for the redemption of his wife, and our father and uncle together have offered the same for Alse. 'T is thought that now, being hard pushed, the Indians will agree to the terms. So thou seest a

better plan than can grow in thy head is made for Alse's help."

Enoch could easily have retorted that Ralph had no more part than himself in this plan, but he answered with perfect sweetness,—

"I care not whose be the plan so 't is for Alse's safety and our mother's life as 't were. But, verily, though I have gained naught, I feel none the worse for making a trial. But hold, brother! What are you doing?"

For, with a sudden recollection of his duty, Ralph had stepped up to Job to secure him.

"What are you doing?" Enoch repeated more sharply.

"Canst thou not see for thyself?" was the short answer.

"Thou art over-hasty, Ralph. Job is even now coming into the camp."

"Well, 't is mistrusted that if he be left at large, he will furnish information of our plans to the Indians."

"Not so," cried Enoch, eagerly; "he is trusty. I'll answer for it."

"He is a rash fellow who will answer for an Indian," said Ralph, laughing. "Nay, Enoch, do not interfere, for 't is but my duty as a soldier."

"There are duties no less binding upon you than those that belong to a soldier. Hath justice and gratitude no claim upon you? 'T is not the fault of this man that I have not succeeded in bringing Alse out of the enemy's hands. Would you repay him for his service to us by a deed like this? A dolt, 't would seem, could see the folly of capturing a man so innocent of harm, delivering himself up of his own accord, withal."

"Well, then," said Ralph, unhanding Job, "he shall walk on before us; but you shall go with him clear into the town to see that he doth not make his escape. As for me, I will come later, for, by my faith, I'll not show myself there as the friend of an Indian."

CHAPTER XIII.

BY HIS OWN WIT.

HOPING that Alse's deliverance was now to be accomplished irrespective of his efforts, Enoch was undecided what his own course should be, but until the event was certain, he would not return to Medfield.

The messenger who had been sent from the Council at Boston to treat with the enemy about the captives, returned with an unsatisfactory answer. Then he was sent a second time with Peter Conway, another Christian Indian, and after much parley the release of Mrs. Rowlandson and some other captives was effected ; but Alse Whitehill was not among them.

When for the third time they journeyed toward Wachusett, they were met by Enoch. His heart was heavy, for he had been given no encouragement to hope for Alse's return, as she

belonged, not to the more conciliatory Nipmucks, but to Philip's company. When the other sagamores met in council to consider whether or not they would return the captives, it was said that he had refused to join them, and angrily declined to make any concession to his foe.

Nepanet and Peter assured Enoch that never would Alse be permitted to return to her own people, and they added that the enemy Indians had declared that she cared no more for the English.

Among the English captives there were those who refused to go home to their friends, and by choice lived for the remainder of their lives with the savages; but Alse, as Enoch well knew, was not of this sort.

"'T is a lie," he said. "Did they not say, to harry us, that Mrs. Rowlandson had married Monaco, the one-eyed chief who sacked Medfield? Nay, friends, say no more of that, but if on the last venture they will not let the child go, find some Indian among them who knows

me, and speak secretly with him, asking if he will do me a service. And if he be willing, I will meet him at such a place as he will describe to you. Tell him to make it plain where the place is, and I will be there."

The messengers on this third trial had a yet larger ransom to offer Philip, and they carried a great store of tobacco and other goods, as conciliatory offerings, but they returned with only an insolent answer for Alse's friends.

"I have now but my own wits to trust to," said Enoch, when told by the two Indians of the result of the treaty.

"You are to go to the great rocks beyond Quaboge, where you will find a hiding-place in the cedars," answered the Indians. "'T is twelve miles to the northward. Go with haste or you cannot be there at the time set, which is when the sun is high overhead after this night and one day's journey."

Enoch was not long in setting out. Remembering the fruitless adventure he had made with

Job, he trembled lest he should find no one to meet him, and Nepanet had neglected to tell the name of the friendly Indian who had professed himself willing to help him. With much uneasiness, therefore, having reached the designated spot, he concealed himself in the cave and waited.



The entrance was hidden by the cedars, but through the scraggy branches he could look forth into the forest beyond; and soon he distinctly saw a tawny figure coming quickly toward him.

In a moment more he sprang out of the cave crying joyfully, —

“Awashamog!”

Yet his joy was instantly clouded, and he said sadly,—

“Yet am I sorry to see thee, for now I know you have not been faithful to the English. Awashamog, thou hast joined the heathen.”

“Yes,” answered Awashamog, with flashing eyes, “I have joined Philip’s men. My friendship I give in exchange for friendship. When Philip first made war on the white men, we did earnestly desire to show our affection for them and for their religion. We were their friends, but they mistrusted and abused us. I would not, like the others, be shut up on an island like cattle. I could not forget that my squaw died for want of food, and that my boy was killed for being outside our town. Yes, I joined the heathen Indians.”

“You have had cause to hate the English,” said Enoch, “yet a poor canoe will sail well on smooth water. ’T is the rough water that proves its worth. I, too, have suffered. Our sister has

been taken captive by Philip's men. My mother is distraught by reason of her sorrow, our home is broken, all is changed. Yet I come here among your people without so much as a knife with which to defend myself. I disclose myself to those of you I have always trusted, not heeding that some have gone over to our enemy."

"If any one harms thee, I will kill him," cried Awashamog.

"I have come hither to find my sister," said Enoch, answering Awashamog's warm glance with one as kind. "They say she is with Philip's company."

"Yes; she was bought for a knife by Philip's son. They treat her well. Do not fear."

"I must find her, Awashamog, and this is my plan. When you go back to Wachusett, I will go with you, and you must pretend to have taken me captive. Then we will devise some way of carrying Alse off. You will help me, is it not so?"

The Indian sat motionless for a moment. His

gaunt figure and drawn face told of the suffering he had undergone, but it also expressed the power of his endurance and an iron will. He knew what the cost of such a promise as Enoch exacted of him must be.

A chance there was in this desperate venture, for the escape of Enoch and Alse, but the anger of Philip would follow the faithless Indian to his death. Nevertheless he answered calmly, —

“Thou shalt prove my friendship now on the rough water.”

CHAPTER XIV.

HER LITTLE MASTER.

ONE morning Alse's little master found her weeping.

It was spring in the wilderness, a feathery green world under a soft sky. The birds were singing in the bushes, and from the swamp came the song of the hylas, rejoicing in the balmy weather. It was spring everywhere but in Alse's heart.

Her little master sat down by her side.

"Why do you cry?" he asked, frowning. "I tell you to laugh."

"I cannot," said Alse. "Could you laugh if you were a prisoner away from all those you love?"

"What! do you love the English still?" asked Metacumsett.

"Yes, always," answered Alse.

"I tell you no," cried the little savage, still more angrily, "for now you are all Indian, same as I am Indian. The white blood has been washed away."

In adopting white captives into a tribe, the custom was to wash them in the river, when it was said that all white blood was washed away; and this custom had been observed in Alse's case. She had undergone the process with silent contempt, but now in her bitterness she said, —

"I am still an English girl, and my white blood could not be washed away by all the water in the river. I shall never be an Indian like you."

In proof of what she said, Alse pushed up her sleeve, showing the smooth white arm of an English child.

"Hold yours beside it," she said.

The boy obeyed, and could but see the contrast between his own tawnyess and the fair skin of his companion. It so angered him that he used his power as he had never done before; he raised

his hand and struck her. Then, wild with rage, he tore away through the wilderness.

Alse now fell to thinking what a life lay before her. To live always with these squalid and brutal savages, exposed to the caprices of the arrogant temper of her master, and away from those she loved. The horror and the homesickness she suffered were greater than she had borne in all her captivity. Perhaps, in time, she herself might become as the savages, which thought is perhaps the bitterest of all those that distress a poor captive in savage hands. Could it be possible, she asked herself, that she would ever forget those dear home-faces that belonged to the happy past? One by one she recalled them,—the tender beauty of her mother, the frank brave countenance of Ralph, the gentle richness of Enoch's face. So real to her seemed the last, framed by green leaves and casting looks of pity and love upon her, that her heart beat violently; and as she leaned forward to look more intently, the lips parted and she believed herself listening to his

very voice. Enoch's voice had ever had a tender inflection when he spoke to her that marked it from all others.

"Be not afraid, Alse; 't is Enoch. Didst think I would never come?" The voice broke with pity. "Nay, dearest, 't is no dream; 't is Enoch at last."

Yes, it was really Enoch, for she was in his arms and he was wiping the tears from her eyes.

"Are you also a captive?" she asked.

"I feign to be," said Enoch, smiling; "but I am come with Awashamog, who is to help us make our escape. Nay, little one, nay, dear little sister, do not cry, for so thou wilt break my heart. Smile once on me as your own merry self, if only as a welcome."

"Yes, for thee I will smile," answered Alse, bravely; but she could not yet trust herself to look into his pitying eyes, but smiled vaguely out on the great wilderness.

"That is right," said Enoch, watching her; but he forbore to criticise the unsuccessful smile.

"Awashamog did not counsel my discovering myself to you till all our plans are made. He feared by your happiness you would betray us to the Indians; but when I saw you grieving so, I could not forbear giving you the comfort I might. Beside, with all our care you might see me and recognize me openly. 'T is therefore safer so, but you must play your part well. Be cautious. Show neither joy nor grief, nor let the Indians suspect that I am aught to you."

Following the dictates of prudence, Enoch would now have stolen away, but he could not withstand Alse's entreaties to give her yet a moment more and a moment more, till perhaps a half-hour had passed.

Although the son of Philip, and with much of his father's arrogance and love of power, Alse's little master, be it remembered, was also the grandson of good old Massasoit, who had welcomed the Pilgrims at Plymouth and of whom no treachery or any vindictive act has been recorded. This little grandson, belike, inherited some of Massa-

soit's amiable qualities; at all events, that he had a loving nature Alse Whitehill had good reason to know.

Yet she could not know, as he fled from her, how much wounded love and pride was mingled with his anger. At first he believed that he would never care again for the girl who boasted of her white blood and her unlikeness to him. But his mood quickly changed, and then he regretted that he had struck her, and longed to make amends. Seeking his mother, he begged her for some samp cooked in bear's grease, which he put in his own wooden bowl, and he took a brace of eagle feathers with which he was wont to adorn himself like a brave chief, and a necklace of wampum from his own neck, and with these offerings he went back to the nook among the trees and bushes where he had left Alse.

Metacumsett went as silently as a boat glides over the water, or as a cloud moves over the blue sky. It is the way of his race, for the Indian is strong and lithe and light of foot. Suddenly,

however, he stopped short, for he heard a voice that had not the sweet music of the voice of "The-little-one-that-laughs."

Then he hid his peace-offerings in the bushes, and, falling to the ground, slipped along snake-wise until he could look between the leaves to the spot where Alse sat in Enoch's arms.

When he saw this, a great pain rose in his throat, and, flinging out the brown arms at which Alse had mocked, he groaned.

"She is white to the heart. She will never be good Indian."



CHAPTER XV.

ON THE MARCH.

THERE was a great bitterness between the Wampanoags and Nipmuck Indians because of the captives that had been released, and it was this division that broke Philip's strength. He now left the Nipmuck country, and with his allies, the Narragansetts, started for his old quarters at Mt. Hope, where in his anger and arrogance he had begun his war with the white men. A weary hungry horde, they set forth on the march.

Ever since that day he had seen Alse with Enoch, Metacumsett had watched her constantly. Although it was more in the way of friendly care than as a master, it could but annoy Alse, knowing that at any time Enoch or Awashamog might wish speech with her.

Sometimes he would say in a wistful tone: —

"Soon you will love Indians;" and Alse, grateful to him for having saved her from that cruel savage who had first owned her, and forgetful of the blow which he had given her in his anger, would always answer with a smile,—

"One Indian do I already love."

But an Indian never forgets, and Metacumsett had seen the look she had given that white captive. He saw also that Alse entered but listlessly into the games in which formerly she had joined with eagerness, and so he watched her and waited.

Meantime, because of this constant guardianship, the danger of Enoch's plan was increased a thousand fold.

"'T is only when Metacumsett's eyes are closed in sleep that they are not upon Alse," said he. "By my faith, we must then capture the two together. What do you think of it, Awashamog?"

"A pappoose plan," answered Awashamog, scornfully, "unless you mean to knock Philip's son on the head."

"No, no, Awashamog, 't is not that I meant;

but I see 't was a foolish thought, and born only of our necessities. What plan have you?"

"We will steal the white child to-night from Philip's tent. At the end of the day's march, all will sleep soundly, and while you wait I will creep in the wigwam and bear the child off in my arms."

The Indians were already journeying toward Mt. Hope, and Enoch was walking under a huge load of his master's merchandise. When under the eye of the Indians, Awashamog would drive him along with the butt end of his gun, ranting and raving at him with constant threats to kill him; then, as they walked apart from the company, he would take the load and they would begin again to discuss their plans.

But, though all others were deceived, Metacumsett suspected the truth. Never for one moment, as they journeyed onward, did he lose sight of Alse.

At sunset the Indians chose a spot in which to encamp. The place was on the edge of a

thick wood, and therefore favorable for Enoch's purpose. But the minds of the Indians were occupied by their own sorry predicament, and they were careless of their captives. There was no feasting and exultation now. Many of them for days had tasted of no food save the bilberries they found by the way. Philip, however, had with him a small quantity of corn, one portion of which was carried by Wootonekanuske, and another by Metacumsett.

Now then, the day's march over, the wife of Philip and the two children sat in their wigwam and ate of the corn, and while they were eating Enoch came and stood at the door or entrance and asked Wootonekanuske for some of it. Wootonekanuske, being of a kind and generous nature, would have given it to him; but Metacumsett sprang up and struck furiously at Enoch, who therefore ran away.

Not knowing that he but feigned hunger to look within the tent, that he might make no mistake as to which was Philip's, Alse began

to cry, thinking him in worse strait than herself.

Then in came Philip, and knowing nothing of what had passed, nor what was the occasion of Alse's tears, he gave her a wounded robin he had just found; but when she began to fondle it, he took it from her and devoured it before her eyes.

Alse had become familiar with the filthy usages of the Indians; but she shuddered and left the wigwam, filled with a sudden horror of this savage life.

"Don't cry for the bird; 't is best eaten," said Metacumsett, who had followed her. "Does not the little white captive know that the bird is never happy when 't is taken from its nest?"

CHAPTER XVI.

IN PHILIP'S TENT.

NIGHT had settled down over the wilderness, a friendly night, lighted only by a crescent moon. There was no rushing of the wind to make one restless, and after their long march the weary Indians slept heavily.

It had been decided that Enoch should be the one to enter the wigwam and carry off Alse, for should Alse awaken and find herself in the arms of an Indian she might scream. Moreover, should Awashamog be discovered in this act, he would forfeit his life to Philip's anger, while were it Enoch, if he were beaten furiously by Awashamog, the sachem might be pacified.

Fortified by these arguments, Enoch stole through the camp to the wigwam where the wary old chieftain, the arch foe of the white men, lay asleep. It was filled with the prostrate fig-

ures of the dusky Indians, and in the midst, like a lamb among wolves, lay the dear sister they had stolen from him. Directly across the opening, but a foot's space distant, lay the little son of Philip, as if even in his sleep he would still guard "The-little-one-who-laughed."

Though the steadfastness of Enoch's purpose did not waver, he stopped before this obstacle, for the risk of stepping over the boy in entering the wigwam and again in returning was too great. After a moment's reflection he took an acorn from a scrub oak near the wigwam, and threw it at the sleeping child. His heart beat wildly, for if Alse should cry out and awaken the Indians his whole plan would be overthrown; but the child had a stout heart and healthy nerves. She uttered no cry, and in a moment got on her feet. She knew at once for what reason Enoch stood there, beckoning and pointing to the wilderness; and realizing the peril of the moment, she yet had courage to send him a glance of reassurance. Slowly she threaded her way among the dark

figures, until she came to the little sleeping sentinel. For a moment she stood here hesitating, looking first with dismay at Metacumsett, and then as if for encouragement at the anxious face of Enoch; then, tucking her skirts more carefully about her, she stepped lightly over the prostrate figure. It was well and bravely done; but as Enoch would have hurried her away, she stooped over her little master and breathed rather than whispered a rueful farewell.

Like the wind the two fled through the camp, on, faster and faster, until they gained the covert of the forest.

"That was a foolish deed," said Enoch, as they slackened their pace. "Your kiss may have awakened the Indian child, and, if so, he will alarm the camp. We must make the more haste for it."

"No, dear brother, he did not waken. Not the least quiver of the eyelids did I see. He sleeps soundly after the weary day, and, of a truth, 't is a dear, kind boy, be he Indian or no. Much

have I to tell you of his friendliness for me, nor could I leave him without one thought of it."

"Hush, dearest!" cried Enoch. "Thy voice is shrill in the air. Speak low, or best not at all."

So they hurried on in silence, till they reached the spot for which Enoch aimed, which lay low by a stream on the other side of the forest. Here Awashamog waited with a raft.

As they would have jumped upon it, out from the shadow of the forest behind them sprang a third figure. It was Metacumsett.

"Stop, stop!" he cried, "I tell you, stop!"

With one bound Awashamog caught him by the throat, and would have despatched him on the spot had not Alse and Enoch rushed quickly forward to save him.

"You shall not hurt Metacumsett, else will I stay in the wilderness," cried Alse.

"Indians are all asleep," said the boy, pointing to the camp, and looking with anger at Awashamog, who he knew suspected him of coming to

hinder their flight, and of having the whole band behind him. "I bring food for 'The-little-one-who-laughs.' I will not have the bird die of hunger in its flight to its nest, though it forgets its master left grieving in the forest. Keep the corn and it will go there safely."

"I will never forget you, dear Metacumsett," said Alse; "but take back the corn, for you will be hungry as well as I. Take the corn, dear Metacumsett."

But with a proud gesture Metacumsett refused to take back his gift, and now, overmastered by impatience, Awashamog seized him, and, deaf to all entreaties, tied his ankles together in such wise that he could not move one foot beyond the other more than six inches' space, for which reason many hours must pass before he could reach the camp.

And so they left him, a proud silent figure upon the river-bank, his black eyes fixed drearily upon Alse until, with the white lad and the Indian, she was lost in the wide wilderness.

CHAPTER XVII.

FLIGHT.

MANY a grievous day's march had Alse undergone with a load on her back, her face set away from the white man's home, and each step costing a heart-ache; but now, though the way was long, and she had barely rested from the previous day's journey, her feet tripped tirelessly after her guides and she little needed for support the arm of Enoch that was so often around her.

Danger, however, lurked in the forest on every side, and between their fear of the bands of Indians in hiding there, and the scouting parties sent out by the English, they went warily. In the event of being taken by the English, Awashamog could expect little mercy, for he was known to have joined the hostile Indians. Therefore, when he had travelled with them for three days, and

Enoch felt sure they had not been pursued by Philip, he begged him to go back to Wachusett and join the Nipmucks, who were now the enemy of his enemy,— the fierce sachem of the Wampannoags. When thus entreated, Awashamog answered proudly,—

“No; I will prove my friendship in trouble even as the canoe is tried on the rough water. I will not leave you, for you shall see that the Indian can show gratitude and friendship.”

Awashamog gave continual proof of his words. He took upon himself the most perilous part of every adventure. He denied himself in the few comforts they had, that a greater share would fall to Enoch and Alse.

At first good fortune followed them. They met neither red nor white men, berries grew plentifully along the way, the air was warm and dry, and they slept well under calm skies.

But one night a violent thunder-storm tore through the wilderness. The slight protection of bark they had made for themselves was carried

away by the wind. Though they succeeded in sheltering Alse, Awashamog and Enoch were drenched to the skin. After the storm passed, the air had a deathly chill in it, and Enoch was taken with an ague. For two days they were forced to remain in that place, while Awashamog applied Indian remedies with Indian patience to the sick lad.

On the third day, though still very weak, Enoch got upon his feet with the determination to push on. It was on the evening of that day that they came suddenly upon a party of savages who were sitting around a small fire.

Enoch, being a few feet in advance of the others, first saw them, and, holding up his hand, he silently articulated the word "Indians," whereupon all three fell with one accord to the ground, where they were hidden by the bushes.

The noise they had made betrayed them to the Indians, who at once jumped to their feet to learn the occasion of it. Fortunately, before they discovered the three travellers, a brood of partridges

flew out of the bushes with a sudden whirr, and the Indians, believing them to have caused the sounds they had heard, went back satisfied to their work. After this, the trembling fugitives dared not risk the stirring of hand or foot. The necessity of keeping immovable for so long a time required all Alse's self-control, and had not the Indians fallen into a quarrel, giving the little party an opportunity to slip away unnoticed, she doubtless would have betrayed them into the enemies' hands, and thereby endured a second captivity.

Having escaped this danger, the journey was resumed.

About this time the berries began to grow scarce. The corn which Metacumsett had given them was gone, and Awashamog had no longer any shot by which he could furnish game. Only one way remained, as it seemed, to save them from starvation.

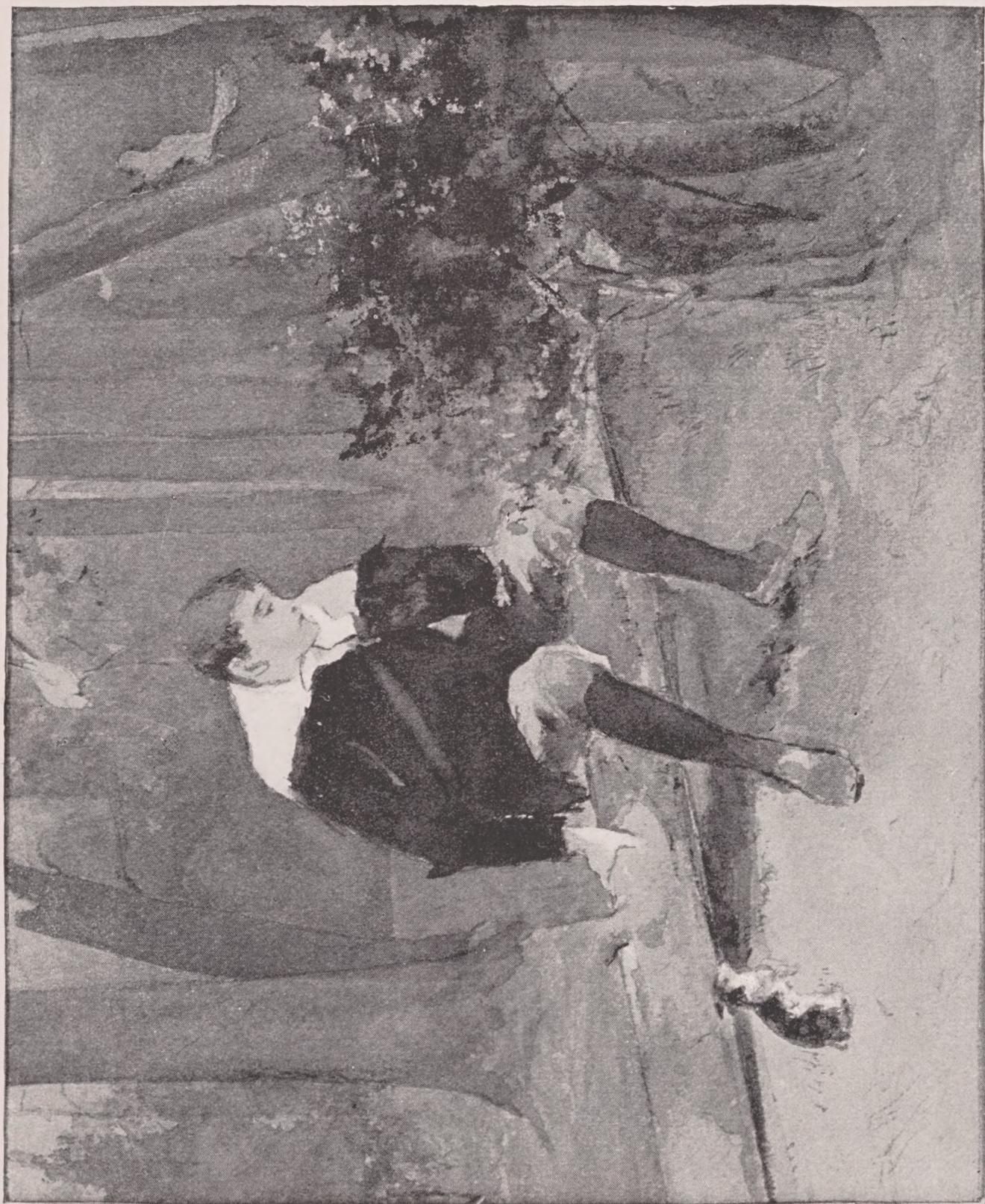
But to take advantage of the trust reposed in him by his dumb brothers to deliver them over to Awashamog for death, seemed the vilest treach-

ery to Enoch, and outraged the sense of kinship that he had felt ever since he had first stretched his baby hands toward dog or cat. Yet Awashamog looked expectantly at him whenever a rabbit scud over the ground or a bird flew overhead, and Alse would say,—

“We are so hungry, brother. And what matters whether the birds be shot from afar, or enticed by thee and then killed, since the end is the same?”

Hunger has no mood for nice distinctions. All day the three went in silence, Enoch not daring to look his comrades in the face and hoping that the next moment would, in some unknown way, provide food for them. At length, toward the setting of the sun, Alse suddenly flung herself upon the ground.

“I can go no farther,” she said. “What use to escape from the Indians if I must die of hunger in the wilderness? Oh that I had stayed with Metacumsett, for never would I go hungry were he able to get food.”



"ENOCH SAT STILL WITH HIS EYES ON THE GROUND."

Then Enoch saw that the time had come when he could no longer delay the revolting deed. He left Alse and Awashamog and sat alone in the forest, and now, as always, the timid creatures of the woods drew near him. First a soft-voiced wood pigeon alighted on his arm, and with cooing notes and pretty sidewise movements of its innocent head, sought his favor; and for the first time in his life Enoch drove a bird away.

"Not the wood pigeon; no, I cannot kill so gentle and trusting a thing," he groaned.

Next a squirrel came leaping down a tree, and, stopping at his side, looked with his bright eyes confidently into the melancholy ones of Enoch. A grouse came from its nest, scattering the forest leaves in its haste to greet him, while many little forest-birds fluttered over his head and sent him twittering messages to the effect that if he but called them they would perch on his hand.

Enoch sat still with his eyes on the ground shame-faced before them, and when after waiting a long time Awashamog and Alse came to look

for him and to see wherefore he did not bring them some creature of which they could make a meal, they found him still sitting there motionless.

Then, because she was very weak and hungry, Alse began to cry, and as they walked away Enoch heard her say, —

“ We shall starve, Awashamog. Enoch loves the creatures better than he loves us. He will let us starve.”

Then Enoch began to walk about in great distress, and in another place he came suddenly upon a raccoon which he killed with a stick before it had time to show its trust in him.

But when, having been somewhat refreshed by eating the raccoon, Alse and Awashamog urged him also to eat, Enoch could not, for thinking of the look the little animal had given him as it turned upon its side and died. So he continued the journey weak from his past sickness, his long fast, and the struggle he had made against his own nature.

Much need he had of strength, for now a great

misfortune befell them. In coming down a steep hill where there were many stones, Alse tumbled, and sprained her ankle so badly that she could not so much as stand upon it; so either they must stay in this place, or one of the two must carry her.

After trial it was found that Enoch could not, and for days Alse travelled in Awashamog's arms. On the third day after this mishap they reached Lancaster.

Now, plainly the time had come when Awashamog should leave them. But when Enoch begged him to return now while he might to the Nipmucks, Awashamog pointed to Alse, and silently shook his head; and the next morning he lifted her again in his arms and doggedly plodded on. There was nothing for Enoch to do but follow, which he did with great anxiety for his friend.

At length they neared Sudbury. Here Enoch knew that some of the English troops were encamped.

Each mile he contested with the Indian, and Alse also begged that he would set her on the ground, assuring him that she would reach the English in safety. But knowing that she could limp but a few steps at a time and that Enoch's strength barely sufficed to carry him unburdened on his way, Awashamog risked a greater and greater distance into the enemy's country. Though of a temper to requite injury with injury, he never forgot a kindness, and it was no more in his nature to desert Enoch now than it had been to accept with patience the insults of the English.

Anxiously, with every faculty on the alert, Enoch pressed on ahead, ready to give the alarm at the approach of danger; but while they were passing through a forest of young oaks, suddenly a company of English soldiers sprang upon them, instantly surrounding Awashamog. Burdened by Alse, the Indian was instantly captured; in truth, had his arms been free he could have made no adequate resistance.

“Unhand him!” cried Enoch. “He is a friendly

Indian who hath helped us to escape from Philip's band. Let him go. See ye not that he is carrying the little maid ? ”

“ Truly, we see that,” answered one of the soldiers ; “ but how comes a friendly Indian here ? If he has a passport, let him show it.”

“ He hath shown the English in our two selves good service. The little maid, who hath been in captivity, hath fallen and hurt herself, and but for him, who hath brought her here, she would have perished in the wilderness.”

“ From what place does he come ? ” asked another soldier, who with a puzzled frown was staring at Awashamog. “ Napanet and Peter Conway and four others were taken from Deer Island to serve as guides and also to negotiate with the Indians ; but I have heard of no others, and this fellow is not one of them, for I saw them all six in Marlborough.”

“ Well, but he hath served us in like manner ; therefore he should go free.”

“ Not so fast, young man,” interrupted another

soldier. "We should rather take him before our captain, who can then make what disposition of him seems best."

But Enoch was wise enough to know that Awashamog's only chance was in the generous impulse of the soldiers, whose bitter prejudice against his race had happily been somewhat overcome by the sight of the white child whom he carried in his arms, and who was now clinging to him as to one whom she had learned to trust.

"You have spoken well for your friend, if so you call him," answered the foremost soldier, having listened for some time to Enoch's arguments; "and such skill have you in speaking that you have well-nigh persuaded me, for one, to let the fellow go. Yet plainly 't were against our clear duty, which is not to decide questions of this sort. So now we will go to our captain, and perchance you can persuade him to give the savage his freedom, especially if he can show passport."

"But what passport so good as the service he was in the very act of rendering to us when you took him prisoner?" cried Enoch, in despair.

"Yea, that is so," assented the second soldier, looking at Alse, who had placed herself in front of Awashamog, as if to defend him from these enemies and was looking at them with imploring eyes.

"Of a certainty now," here broke in the soldier who had regarded Awashamog with so puzzled an expression, "I know the fellow, a rare rogue too. 'Twas he I saw firing on the English after the sacking of Lancaster. To the captain with him, or I myself will send a bullet through his heart."

The soldiers, as if ashamed of their softer mood, now refused to listen further to Enoch, and presently they were all marching toward the camp.

Awashamog walked between two men, while a third, he that had been most ready to release the Indian, carried Alse, who, as she had begun

the journey with tears for Metacumsett, now ended it with tears for Awashamog. Having carried her some distance in silence, the soldier said, —

“ Why, now, my little maid, surely you are the first who ever saw the end of a captivity with tears.”

“ They are not for myself,” Alse answered, “ but for our good Indian friend, so rudely treated after the kindness he hath done us. Why, good sir, but for him, I would be a captive in the wilderness; and many a weary day has he travelled, as thou dost now, with the load of a great girl in his arms.”

“ And no great load, either,” said the soldier, smiling.

“ Yes; but were you to go mile after mile after this fashion, perchance you would find me heavier. All I know is, that with Enoch, my brother, so feeble, and myself scarce able to take a step, never without his aid would I have found myself among Christian people, nor look again, as

I now hope to do, into the dear face of my mother. Therefore, seeing the danger he is in, how can I help grieving?"

"Well, pluck up thy spirits, child, for perchance our captain will let the fellow go, though surely not if 't is proved that he is with those heathen that sacked Lancaster; nor wouldst thou wish it, since he would no doubt use his liberty to work more mischief to thy own race."

Hitherto Enoch and Alse had hardly given a thought to Awashamog's future as far as it related to the English, but now they perceived the truth of the soldier's words, for were Awashamog free he would undoubtedly cast in his lot with his own race and share its crimes.

On arriving at the camp, the Indian was immediately put under arrest. Between the hot feeling of the English and the obduracy of Awashamog, Enoch's efforts on his behalf were useless. His sole hope was in an appeal to the Court in Boston; but before he reached that place Awashamog was beyond help.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE WHITE PEOPLE'S COUNTRY.

THE next morning Enoch and Alse found themselves on their way to the Bay Colony in one of the wagons that had been sent with provisions to the branch of the army at Sudbury and was now returning.

In the years that had passed since Winthrop and his company had first settled on Massachusetts Bay, Boston had grown into a seemly town thick-set with buildings along its sea-line, and even venturing up its steep hillsides. The three most prominent hills were strongly fortified, and from the highest was a beacon which, being at a height of more than two hundred feet above the sea-level, could be seen at a great distance.

One can imagine to eyes so long accustomed to the rough and lonely wilderness how fair must

have seemed the flourishing town, with its comely houses surrounded by gardens and orchards, its long streets, its shops and public buildings; yet the familiar sights of the every-day life of civilized people were far more attractive to our travellers fresh from the squalid misery of the savages. A sweet-faced woman leading a child, a troop of fresh-cheeked boys hurrying from school, a girl giving a kitten a bowl of milk,—these, to the amusement of the carter, were the sights that pleased them most.

Arriving at the town pump, they saw that a notice of some sort was affixed to it, and this turned out to be a proclamation appointing a day in that week to be set apart as one of solemn thanksgiving for the recent victories over the heathen.

And now, having followed for a while the chief street in the town, the cart rumbled along a straggling lane that led to a pretty green common, the same that was sometimes called the Training Field and again the Sentry Field.

And this common has been, first and last, the witness of many a stirring scene or awful tragedy. At this time, in one part thereof, the trainbands were practised in arms, while in another part young sweethearts strolled or sat by the great wishing-stone far up the hillside. Boys and girls played their games here on this common, and, alas, here too were criminals and wicked men put to their death,—and some of them not so wicked after all, as it appears to us. So the common is greatly checkered with the lights and shadows of human life, and bound up with the town's history.

Passing around Sentry or Beacon Hill, our travellers came into Tremont Row, where were clustered the homes of many famous men of the old colony. Here had lived Endicott, Bellingham, and Vane, each at one time governor, and here also lived those stern old divines Cotton and Davenport, who had played as great a part as the magistrates in directing the affairs of the state. Among these distinguished personages

dwelt several of the rich merchants of the town; and among them Mr. Benjamin Oliver, the uncle of Alse.

The house was one of the few of that date built of brick. Of a simplicity far enough from the taste of our day, it yet had a stateliness that was impressive to eyes more accustomed to elegance than were those of our wanderers from the wilderness. A deep courtyard in front, divided in two terraces, was ornamented with shrubs and flowers, and one ascended two flights of steps to reach the broad doorway.

Having been left by the carter at the gate, Enoch and Alse walked up to the door of the house, before which for a moment they paused to summon courage to lift the great brass knocker. But hardly had Enoch's hand left it before the door was thrown open by an African slave, or Moor, as negroes were then called, and at once, before they could state their errand, the whole family came into the hall to welcome them.

So it happened that, ragged, unkempt, browned,

and coarsened by her life in the wilderness, did Alse Whitehill make her first visit to that town. As she stood there regarding her relatives and inwardly commenting on the nicety of their apparel, she thought of the flowered silk in which she had once dreamed of making such a fine figure; but true indeed it is that no finery, however brave, would make these two so interesting as the adventures they had passed through, and the suffering they had borne.

For many years after Philip's War, the favorite stories told by New England firesides were tales of captivity, and some who had been carried away by the Indians published an account of their sufferings, and these doleful narratives passed through many editions. And many and many a time would Alse have to repeat the tale her uncle now drew from her.

But Enoch put by the praises that were sung to him for the bold part he played in it, with these words:—

“It irks me to lose time thus. I would fain

press on to Medfield, so that our poor mother may be comforted by the knowledge that her child is restored to her."

"Well then, lad, have patience," said Uncle Benjamin, "for thy mother is not in Medfield, having been brought hither to my house in the hope that new scenes would cure her malady."

At this news Enoch and Alse sprang up, crying in a breath: "Then let us go quickly to her."

"Nay, dear children," said the aunt, catching Alse and drawing her with pity upon her knee; "for thy mother lies very ill, and we know not whether or no she can bear such excitement."

"'T was the loss of Alse that caused her illness, surely the sight of her will cure it," protested Enoch.

But alas! never was a creature so feeble as poor Mistress Marsden at that time. The surgeon would not venture to say that her strength sufficed to bear the slightest shock, albeit it was that of right good news, and touching the very calamity

that had impaired her reason. The question therefore being unanswerable by his science, he had left the responsibility to his patient's friends.

From the moment Alse was taken by the Indians, the poor mother brooded constantly over the calamity, her imagination wandering unchecked through all the horrors of a captivity among a barbarous enemy. Night brought no respite, for she could not sleep. What wonder, therefore, that her mind should give way! Her cry had been continually for Alse; but for the last few days Enoch's name had been ever on her lips, and it was finally decided that he should first be admitted to her chamber.

It was an anxious time to that poor lady's friends when he approached her bedside.

Though not mistrustful that the result of his communication would be otherwise than favorable to her recovery, Enoch approached her with an emotion that made his heart beat with a violence such as no danger that he had encountered in the wilderness had caused, and the more so because

of the low moan bearing his own name in an agony of entreaty, which was the only sound she made. Yet must he force himself to hide this emotion and to speak to her in a steady and cheerful voice.

"Nay, dear mother, thou hast no need to call me, for here I am at thy side," he said, stooping down and taking her hand, while she looked at him with dull vacant eyes and murmured,—

"Enoch, my boy Enoch! Hast thou seen him?"

"Yea, I have, dear mother, and ever he was upon thy errand, for he loves thee well."

"Talk not of that, but tell me of what success he hath in his enterprise?"

"Great success he hath, in good sooth. All goes well, mother."

"Is it so, then? Enoch has a wise head on his young shoulders. Is it truly so?"

"Yes, all goes well,—wondrous well," continued the lad, in a soothing voice. "You have no further need to harrow your poor heart with

fears. Already he is bringing thy ewe lamb home to thee. All goes well."



This single sentence he repeated again and again, until doubtless it found its way to her poor wandering mind, for she answered, —

"I am so weak, else would I get up and go forth to meet them. Yet all goes well. Did you not say so? Surely, good lad, thou wilt not take back thy word?"

"No, never. Thou canst rest in peace. And now, if thou wilt try to sleep, I will come again and tell thee how it fares with Enoch and thy dear Alse. Only close thy poor eyes and sleep."

"Yea, but how could the poor mother sleep with her child among the wicked savages?" began the poor soul, in a more troubled tone. "And was it not cruel for them to come and bid her to sleep, unmindful of all her woe? Was it not cruel, lad?"

"Yes, but all goes well *now*, mother; thou canst sleep now."

"In good truth, I am weary," said the mother; and, as she spoke, she closed her eyes and presently slept.

Greatly pleased was the surgeon at this sleep, and praised Enoch for his wise tact, and when she awakened he was allowed to see her a second time.

Now, to his great joy, she knew him, yet, cautioned by the surgeon, he ventured only so far as to say that Alse would soon come, and meantime she must lie quiet and rest, that she might be strong enough to welcome her.

This waiting was a sorry trial to Alse; but as all sought to comfort and make much of her, and as her mother was improving fast, she tried to be patient. It was on the third day of her stay in Boston that she was permitted to see her mother; but of that meeting there was no witness save Enoch, who, having taken her to the bedside and seeing that no harm was likely to come of it, slipped out of the room, leaving the two together.

CHAPTER XIX.

A LETTER FROM RALPH WHITEHILL TO MISTRESS MARDSEN.

MY VERY LOVING AND HONORED MOTHER,—A good comrade of mine going from this place to the bay, I take occasion to send you, by him, news of myself, and an account of our recent victory over the Indians, by which it doth truly appear that God no longer holds them as a scourge over us.

About the time our dear Alse was brought in from the enemy, I engaged under Captain Church to hunt the savages in the vicinity of Mt. Hope. On my life, I have never seen the like of this man for bravery and mother-wit. He doth fight in the very manner of the Indians themselves, and by these means and cunning sleights he doth often contrive to outwit them. Our company, which, of a truth, is of a motley sort, is made up of thirty Englishmen and twenty confederate Indians, for Captain Church pursues a far different policy in the treatment of the Indians than any other officer under whom I have served, and by no means doth he hesitate

to make use of the friendly sort; and as for the hostile Indians, when once they have surrendered to him, so wisely doth he treat them that they too fight well on our side.

Well, mother dear, it fell out, after several sorties, that on the second of this lune, as doubtless the word has reached you in Boston ere this time, we surprised Philip about Bridgewater, and killed some one hundred and thirty of his men, though Philip himself escaped. Among the captives were his wife and son. Sorry specimens of royalty they were, though I could but admire the spirit of the boy, so high and mighty he carried himself in his fallen condition. It happened that I, with several others, was chosen to convey the prisoners to Plymouth, and on the way thither great sport was made of Philip's son, and all did treat him harshly for his father's sake.

My thoughts turned continually to our poor Alse, who was once in like plight as himself, and who has now escaped from her enemies, as I think 't is not in the destiny of this poor little Indian lad to do, and in my compassion for him I urged the men to use a fairer conduct toward him. Greatly they laughed at my reason for sparing the child, saying that 'twas the more natural that I should take satisfaction for the sufferings of our

captives, who truly have received scant mercy from their savage captors.

But no, the deliverance of my dear sister did incline me to show mercy to this miserable little prince, toiling in the dust and heat to his fate, and enduring all in proud silence with courage worthy of an old brave. Therefore did I do all in my power to make his condition more bearable to him, and well I know that Alse, who was ever kind and pitiful, will be glad that I took no revenge upon this harmless and innocent enemy. That same night we delivered the captives to the authorities at Plymouth, and I trust they will not deal harshly with the boy.

Now there was not a soldier, among all the companies in this region, who was not eager to pursue Philip. About ten days after the last engagement, a deserter from the Indians came to Captain Church with the word that he would lead him to the spot where Philip was hidden and help to kill him.

Philip, with a small body of men, had taken refuge at Bristol Neck. His only way of escape was over the narrow isthmus, which was well guarded by our men. The Wampanoags being now nearly starved and greatly weakened by disease, one of Philip's men did advise him to surrender, upon which the haughty rascal lifted

his tomahawk and struck him dead. Then, in revenge, this man's brother stole away through the bushes, and, coming to Captain Church, offered to do as I have said. Then away we went in pursuit of Philip.

'T was a hideous swamp, of a truth, mother, whereunto we tracked this beast,—a black swamp, where the roots of the trees lay twisted like snakes in the mud, and the air was heavy and damp; and never did I see one so stiff with vengeful purpose as the Indian we followed thither.

On reaching the swamp, the captain set us at certain distances to form an ambuscade, a white man and an Indian behind each covert. With me was the Indian whose brother Philip had killed; and now, all being in readiness, we began to fire, when out of his shelter ran Philip, and in the direction where this Indian and myself lay concealed. Truly my heart beat hard, for here within fair range was that bloody savage that had brought such ruin and ruth upon us, the awful Philip that hath stirred his cruel race to war with us. Filled with great exultation that 'twas the Lord's will that I, a stripling, should free the world from this wretch, I raised my gun and took aim. But just as I pulled the trigger, the Indian whose brother Philip had killed made a movement that caused me to miss fire. I saw that he

had done it of set purpose, wishing to revenge his brother's death.

"Fire!" said I.

And he shot Philip through the heart. He fell with his face down in the mud, his gun under him. Thus dies a vile wretch.

I doubt not, ere this reaches you, this news will be spread through all the country round about, but I have writ that which I have seen with my own eyes.

Hoping that now thou art in right good health and that after this black storm of war is over, we shall re-unite in our dear home, I am

Thy dutiful and loving son,

RALPH WHITEHILL.

The death of Philip, of which Ralph wrote so full an account in the letter, practically ended the war, although there was still trouble to the eastward.

The colonies had suffered bitterly from the destruction of property and loss of life. Beside the fearful waste of lives among the husbandmen and bread-winners, hundreds of fair women and innocent children had fallen under the tomahawk,

so that there was hardly a family that had not borne the brunt of war. The atrocities practised by the benighted savages had a barbarizing effect upon his enemy, and bred a merciless spirit that now showed itself in vindictive and ugly acts. The head of Philip was taken to Plymouth and stuck upon a pole on the village green. For twenty years it was left to bleach on the casement of the fort. Every week, usually upon a lecture-day, an execution of Indians took place upon Boston common. And now the question arose, what should be done with Philip's wife and little son?

The advice of the leading divines was asked, and in this case, as in all others, the Puritans sought for guidance in holy writ. That the children of Saul and Achan suffered for their father's guilt seemed a reason to them why Philip's innocent son should share the fierce sachem's fate. The household of Benjamin Oliver was among those who begged that mercy should be shown to the harmless grandson of good old Massasoit; but

it was a rude time, and the virtues of charity and forgiveness as applied to the Indians were not popular, and though the life of Metacumsett was spared, his fate was hardly less cruel.

Among the petitions on his behalf that were sent to the Council was one that has not been preserved in any collection. It set forth at some length the services that this little lad had shown to two white captives, and was signed by the names of Enoch Marsden and Alse Whitehill. If the voices of such men as John Eliot, the Roxbury preacher and apostle to the Indians, and the brave and politic soldier Benjamin Church were disregarded, the entreaty of two obscure children would naturally have no effect upon the Council. As a matter of history, the guiltless son of Philip was sold into slavery in the Bermudas. One of the historians of that age passes over the matter with these words: "On this day the little son of Philip goeth to be sold."

The act was a great blot upon New England's history, and we look back with wonder on these

hard men who could take such vengeance upon an innocent child.

"To sell souls for money seemeth to me dangerous merchandise," said the good Eliot, and all posterity mourns that his wise counsel was ignored.

History tells us nothing of the boy's future; whether his proud spirit was broken under the lash of the slave-driver, or whether, as seems more likely, the transportation from the cool breezes of his native clime to the tropical heat of the Bermudas resulted in ending a life that must have been bitterer than death, we do not know. With the words, "On this day the little son of Philip goeth to be sold," we must take our leave of him.

Awashamog met his fate at the hands of the soldiers, in an endeavor to escape. He fought dearly for a life that perhaps he valued as little as any one, yet would not sell cheap to the despised white man.

Greatly as the English suffered by the war, it

was one of utter annihilation to the Indian. Except as an ally of the French, he caused no more disturbance in the colonies, and as a factor in New England politics disappeared altogether.

Philip had fought a relentless and cruel war, but it was for his wife, his children, and his country. If patriotism is a virtue in the white man, it cannot be evil in the red one. The revolting cruelties practised by the Indians are those of a race exterminated before it has time to evolve into a civilized people, and the indifference to their provocations, injuries, and final punishment which we find in the old historians has no justification.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

DIRECTLY after the war was over, the chief persons of our narrative left Boston for their own home.

The farm had been much neglected, and Master Marsden wished his sons' help in the harvest work.

Ralph had had enough of fighting Indians, and was ready to turn his courage and resolution to the tasks of the husbandman. With Enoch it was far otherwise, for his old desire to uplift the ill-starred children of the wilderness from the misery of their mental and moral degradation had been but strengthened by his experience among them. The duty seemed especially laid upon him by the fate that by his devotion and loyalty to his white friend had befallen Awashamog. In the exaltation of this purpose the

narrower duties of the farmer seemed intolerable to him. Unfortunately this project was still regarded with disfavor by Master Marsden.

"Now when the country is burdened with a war-debt of half a million caused by these bloody savages, is a poor time methinks to use money in their behalf," he said. "Already hast thou book learning enough for thy purpose without college training; for if he can learn the lesson at all, thou canst teach an Indian to keep his hands off thy scalp, and that twice two makes four and not five, when 't is a matter of his own profit, without the aid of Greek and Latin."

The wisdom of this remark, so apparent to us, was directly opposed to the accepted opinion of the colonists. For this reason, and because the talent of Enoch seemed to justify the expense of a college course, Mr. Oliver now came forward with an offer to pay half the college fees, if he were permitted to devote his life to the conversion and teaching of the Indians.

Marsden did not at once accept his brother-in-

law's offer. Before pledging himself to spend so much as he must in bearing even half the costs of Enoch's education, he wished to think the matter over; and his tone did not seem to promise well for his eventual consent. Here the matter would have dropped for that time, had not Alse, emboldened by her sympathy for Enoch, left her place with the children, and stood by her step-father's side.

"And if it should be, father," she said, "that you send Enoch to college, I will do the little that I can to help,—for if my uncle Benjamin be willing, I will give the flowered silk as an eke."

"What does the child mean?" asked her uncle, with the chuckle in his voice and the merry smile lurking about his face that made him so great a favorite with his sister's children.

"Why, now, the flowered silk that long ago you sent me as a birthday gift, uncle. Right beautiful is it and very costly, so that 't will count, I doubt not, for as much as many bushels of Indian corn."

On the subscription list of Harvard College one finds strange merchandise which in those days was taken in lieu of Indian corn, the usual payment, so that Alse's thought, odd as it now seems, was not unnatural, nor did any question its propriety.

"The abominable, gaudish silk? Aye, I do remember it well, and thy foolish satisfaction in it; but it doth seem that thou art no vain hussy, child, after all," said Master Marsden, well pleased, and recalling no doubt the bedizened figure of the little maid, whose pride in her new finery had seemed so intolerable to him.

"And wouldest thou give away my gift, Alse Whitehill? Fie on thee, thou unmannerly girl!" cried Uncle Benjamin, pulling her upon his knee and stroking her pretty head with a gentleness that proved his anger to be but feigned. "We are not yet put to such straits that thou must part with thy braveries to furnish means for our undertakings. Nay, nay, thou must keep my gift, for, on my word, when thou art a little older

thou canst carry off a bit of finery like the silk as well as another."

"Nay, but let me tell you what has long been on my mind," said Alse, eagerly. "Truly, uncle, the flowered silk did tempt me wofully to vanity. Notwithstanding the awful troubles that fell upon our people, I thought of naught else but that foolish finery, so that in secret I did carry always a piece of it the better to keep it in mind, though the news of the Indians was worse and worse each day, and all beside myself seemed sober enough. At last came the time when the savages were seen round our own town. I myself could see them on Mt. Nebo and Noon Hill, which are but as a stone's-throw, as one may say, from our very door. And that same day did Master Wilson preach about my wicked vanity and the great troubles that had befallen because of it, stirring me mightily to repentance."

"Of *thy* vanity? Nay, not *thine*, child," said Marsden.

"Why, so I thought, for whose else could have

been so great?" answered Alse. "It doth seem as if he must have had me in his mind; but, however that might be, being greatly affrighted, I meant to throw away the strip o' silk and forget it altogether. But of a sudden, before I could do aught with it, the Indians fell upon our town and carried me away with them into the wilderness, and I half believed 't was all because of the use I made of the flowered silk.

" That night, as I lay on the ground with the horrid savages all about me, and thinking that any moment one might come and cruelly put me to death, I suddenly thought of the day my mother brought me my uncle's gift, and how ever since I had been filled with foolishness, rebelling mightily because 't was put away out of sight. So then, I resolved, if I were e'er delivered out of the hands of the savages, that I would put it to some better use; but, as thee knows, for a pretty while was I forced to stay with them. Now, because my little master was kind and they did try to make me as one of

themselves, I felt not so bitterly toward them as before, but pitied their sad state, for they fear not God and are very wicked. And so, uncle, be you willing, I would gladly give the flowered silk to make them better."

Having thus set her case forth, Alse awaited her answer; but for a moment's space none could speak, for thinking of the long captivity she had borne, and the reason there was for true thankfulness that she stood there unharmed before them. Her mother looked at her with tears, and Enoch with the bright face of one who is inspired by a fine action. At length her uncle said,—

"Thou shalt do what pleases thee best with my gift, dear little maid, for all me. It rests solely with thy father whether thou canst make this sacrifice for thy soul's good;" and for a moment a suspicion of a twinkle showed in his pleasant brown eyes.

Marsden looked first up and then down, with a side glance at Alse. Then he drew a long



ALSE.

breath as of one who will struggle no more and said,—

“Verily, I will not be a stumbling-block to the child. She shall do with the silk according as her own heart prompts, and right glad am I that ‘t is full of pity rather than bitterness.”

And this being his way of saying that he would give consent to Enoch’s wish, preparations were now made for him to go to the college; and as soon as he was settled there, the family of Master Marsden returned to Medfield.

It was a hazy autumn day when the homeward journey was made; and as toward the evening they came into the lovely town, it lay in the arms of its blue river in an Arcadian peacefulness such as discredited the tumult and tragedy of which it had been the scene.

As Alse stepped under the lilacs that grew by the gate of their own home, Drusilla, the dove, flew down from her perch, and settled in her accustomed place upon the little girl’s breast.

“Look! ‘t is an omen of peace,” cried Mistress

Marsden, smiling at this emblem of purity and innocence on the child's bosom.

"Yes, dear Drusilla, thou wilt come to me now," cried Alse, "though thou wouldst not lie upon my breast whilst I cherished deceit and vanity there. But how comes it that the dove remaining here after the fowls have been taken away should be so fat and sleek? Surely she has foraged well for herself in our absence."

"Not she," laughed Susannah, who had come with others to give a welcome to her old playfellow. "No creature in all our settlement hath fed so well as she, for all this sad time of thy captivity I and thy playfellows, for love of thee, have fed Drusilla. 'T is a great thing, dear Alse, to be beloved as thou art."

After the war the Christian Indians were allowed to return to their own towns. Some of them whose homes had been destroyed were settled in Medfield. We know that the civilization of the Indian was never accomplished. The transition

from the wild free life of the forest to the measured life of the white man was too abrupt, and those who did not dash themselves to pieces in vain resistance to his power gradually succumbed to the conditions of civilized life for which they were not prepared. Of the poor remnant of the Massachusetts tribes that survived King Philip's War, the lot of these Medfield Indians was the happiest. To the work of their uplifting Enoch devoted himself with all the fervor of his nature, and, like a gold thread through the dull texture of their lives, was woven the friendship of Wanolasset, The-little-one-who-laughs.

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